

1

*Religio Bibliopolæ:*  
OR THE,  
**RELIGION**  
OF A  
**BOOKSELLER:**

Which is likewise  
Not improper to be perus'd by those  
of any other CALLING or PROFESSION.



---

---

**L O N D O N:**

Printed, and sold by T. WARNER at the  
Black Boy in Pater-noster-row, MDCCXXVIII.

Price One Shilling and Sixpence.

Речи о  
житії  
Іоанна  
Богослівя





TO THE

# READER.

THE Author of this Treatise not having Leisure to finish this Piece as he intended, being call'd aside upon unavoidable Reasons, we have been compell'd to supply that Defect by another Hand, yet with all the Care possibly to reach the Air and Stile of the Author, which is of that Neatness and Facility as must needs recommend it (were there nothing else considerable) to the Taste of such an Age as this. The Method being obvious and easy, the Notions bold and intelligible, and the whole throughout acted with such a Spirit of Life and Vigour, as certainly can never fail of Acceptation with the truly Learned and Ingenious.

Under

## To the Reader.

Under such Prejudices do we labour; and our Conceptions of Things are for the most part so irregular and monstrous, that but to attempt our Delivery, and set us free from the slavish Power of Custom and Education, wherewith we are so miserably involved, merits no small Commendation, tho' the Success be unanswerable to the Undertaking: But to clear our dim Sight, to take the Film from our Eyes, and place us in the open Sun-shine of Reason, and true Judgment; to acquaint us with the Prerogative of our own Understandings, and the due Liberty and Freedom of using them, is an Achievement that exacts the highest Applause and Gratitude from the better and nobler Part of Mankind.

Hereby we are enabled to make a true Estimate of Things, to divest them from all those foreign and spacious Accouplements, with which Error and Mistake have cloathed them. We shall then see Things in their own native and naked Forms, and be able to reduce them to their true and intrinsick Worth and Value.

The greatest and most universal Mischief Mankind suffers under, is the Delusion of a false and unrectified Imagination. This is an Error, in the first Concoction, and gives a Tincture to all our Judgments, and a Byass to all the Actions of our Lives: The very Ground and Cause of all our Miscarriages. We derive false Conceptions from our Cradles, and suck it in with our Mother's Milk, Our Nurses, &c. destroy

## To the Reader.

firoy us in our very Infancy with their Tattle and Impertinence, which root themselves so deeply in our Fancies, that we can hardly, if ever, disengage our selves from them all our Life after. Hence we contract a Habit of Laziness, and become fitly disposed to take Things upon Trust and Reputation, to save the Charge of a little Examination, and Study: The Spring and Rise of all our late Repentance and Vexation.

Now the Business of this Author, is to instruct us how to become our own Masters, and to make use of those Faculties our Creator hath endued us with, to those Ends and Purposes for which they were intended.

The Reader upon the first View will find this Treatise to be an Imitation of that exquisite Piece of Dr. Brown, call'd Religio Medici, however without the least Presumption of reaching so brave an Original, tho' not without the Hopes of very near resembling him in some of his noblest Flights and Excellencies.

The principal Subject of the whole is purely disputable, as being for the most part Matter of Opinion, wherein it has ever been lawful to take which Side we please: And tho' he sometimes ventures upon Mysteries of an higher Nature, yet he hopes 'tis done with that Reverence and Tenderness, as may render him at least excusable in that Behalf. For notwithstanding, the Expression may appear dogmatical, the Design is wholly an Essay and Experiment, and not

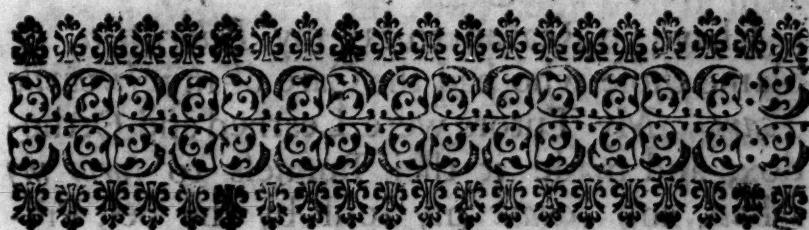
## To the Reader.

not to be taken for an arbitrary and decisive Sentence of those Matters.

I shall forestall the Reader's Impatience with no longer Harangue, not in the least doubting, but upon the first Reading, his Consent to, and Approbation of this Treatise, will be a sufficient Justification of the Author, and his Attempt.



THE



THE  
RELIGION  
OF A  
BOOKSELLER.

**T**HOUGH Trades (as well as Nations) have Scandals fastn'd upon them in the Lump, yet there are some in all Professions to whom the abusive Character is not due. Booksellers in the Gross are taken for no better than a Pack of *Knaves* and *Atheists*; (tho' Thanks to our few **Kindred** among the Stars, 'tis only by prejudic'd Men) yet among them there is a Retail of Men who are no Strangers to Religion and Honesty. I, that am one of that Calling, am bold to challenge the Title of a Christian, neither am I ashamed to expose my Morals.

B

I have

## 2     *The Religion of a Bookseller.*

I have no Reason to tax my *Education*, or blame those who had the Care of my *Juvenile Years*. My Tutors were Learned and Orthodox, and made it their Business to form my *Mind*, and square my Soul by the best Precepts and purest Examples. Yet when I arrived at Years of maturer Judgment; I found Occasion to prune my self, and lop off many Excrescences; to wipe out the early Impressions of my infant Years, and unlearn the *Notions* I suck'd in with my *Mother's Milk*. Tho' there were no *Legends* in the Nursery, nor *Heresies* in the Schools where I was brought up: Yet my blooming *Fancy* was fertile in *Errors*, and sprouted forth in many *Luxuriant Thoughts*. It was the Task of my riper Judgment to correct These, and reduce my self to the Standard of *Reason* and *Faith*.

HAVING therefore got the Weather-gage of *Youthful Mistakes*, by diligent Scrutinies, and proper Remarks; having put in the Balance and weigh'd my *Native Religion* with all others that are extant, I now make that the Object of my Choice, which before was only the Effect of *Prepossession*; and as I was listed a *Soldier of Christ* in my *Baptism*, so now I declare my self a *Volunteer* in his *Service*: What was then done without my *Knowledge*, I now ratify by my free *Consent*. And I resolve not to change my *Banner* as long as I live.

'T is no *Solecism* in Divinity to say, That the *Prince of Peace* is the *Lord of Hosts*. The *Church*

Church Militant is his Army composed of many Battalions, in different Posts, and under various Orders. So long as they all serve the great Captain of our Salvation, and practise well the Discipline of their Arms, I refuse not to give the Word of Peace to any, let him be of what Company or Troop soever. The Variety which we behold in the Universe is not its Deformity, but its Beauty. As the Eye is more ravish'd with a Landskip which invites it with the grateful Interpositions of Hills and Vallies, Woods and champian Grounds, than if it were let out to lose it self in the Uniformity of a waste Horizon or empty Prospect: So is the truly pious Soul more surpriz'd with the Glory of the Christian Religion when various Apprehensions agree in the same substantial Holiness, (**one Star differing from another in Glory**) yet all shining with a light borrowed from the same Fountain. And doubtless he is the Man who is most likely to be a Member of the Church Triumphant, who cordially embraces with the extended Arms of Good-will, who ever are dignified with the Image of Piety, tho' not distinguish'd with his own Superscription.

I profess my self an impartial Lover of all good Men, and do presume every Man to be good till I find him otherwise. I have as little Zeal about things that are manifestly indifferent, (either pro or con) as any Man in the World, for 'tis a Principle I receiv'd from my Educa-

## 4 *The Religion of a Bookseller.*

tion, that the real Differences of good and intelligent People are not so wide as they seem, and that through Prejudice and Interest they do many Times contest about Words, whilst they do heartily think the same thing.

I am not fond of the Names which distinguish one Party from another in the *Church*. I esteem not a Man the better for being regimented in this *Communion*, rather than in that. And for ought I know, in the *Camp of God*, a *Reformade* may be as acceptable, as in those of Men. However a *Mutineer* in either is odious, and to raise *Factions* about *Religion*, is to adore *Mars* instead of *Christ*, and to commence a War for the sake of Peace. I cannot approve of their bitter *Zeal*, who, if they cannot call down Fire from *Heaven*, will kindle it on the *Earth* against all that think not as they do. He is an ill Disputant for Christianity, who uses no other Topicks than Gunpowder and Steel. *The Logick of Mahomet becomes not a Disciple of Jesus*; and I should make but an Hypocritical Convert, were I to be Dragoon'd into *Religion* by the domineering Arguments of *Booted Apostles*.

To persuade to Conformity by Prisons and Confiscations, is in my Apprehension something like demonstrating a Proposition in *Eudid*, or apologizing by a Beetle and Wedges, and I conceive they will equally produce their Effects; when any *Mathematician* shall do the one, the *Spiritual Court* may perform the other.

ther. We find few edify'd by a Dungeon, or instructed by the spoiling of their Goods. *Force* hath as little Power on Souls, as a Chirurgeon's Knife on the Understanding and Affections of Men: *Remedies* must have some Analogy with the Sick and their Diseases. 'Tis found Reason (which is of our Essence and Constitution) with some little Intermixtures of Kindness and Love, that must make Men Proselytes to the Church of *England*, or nothing.

THE USE I make of this Variety in Religions is far different: *Truth* is *Homogeneous*, and attracts to it self all that is of its own *Nature*, wheresoever dispers'd or separated, rejecting the rest as not pertaining to it. Thus I overlooking the *Errors* and *Mistakes* of those who differ from me, at the same Time embrace their *Orthodox Tenets*, and shunning their *Vices*, I imitate their *Virtues*. This is to take Things by the right Handle, and like the *Bee* to suck *Honey* out of every *Weed*. It is of the *Nature* of the *Sun*, who has Commerce with many Pollutions, yet remains himself undefiled.

I abhor that mercenary Course of joining my self with any *Party* of *Christians* that is uppermost, to abet the prevailing *Faction*, and assert the Opinions most in Fashion. This is to be a Weather-cock in *Religion*, pliable to every fresh Gale of *Interest*. Neither on the other side do I think it good Manners or Prudence

## 6 The Religion of a Bookseller.

dence to affront the Religion of the State, and by a saucy Impertinence condemn those who worship God in the manner prescrib'd by the Laws of the Land. In my *Travels* I learn'd this *Moderation*, and he that knows not how to practise it, is not fit to stir out of his Chimney Corner. *Religion* does not authorize *Rudeness*, neither is *Arrogance* compatible with *Devotion*. It is difficult to find a Company of four or five Men together, where there is not at least a *Triumvirate* of *Religions*, and he that will set up for a *Dictator* among them, shall have all their Forces united against himself.

I do not value any Man's *Religion* by his starch'd Looks or *supercilious Gravity*. I hate to put on an unsociable Face, or screw my self into an ill-humour'd *Riddle*; I do not angle for the *Character* of a *Saint*, by magisterially declaiming against the *Innocent Diversifications* of Human Life, and ranking things indifferent among the greatest Crimes. Above all I cannot approve of those who are prone to fasten *God's Judgments* on particular Occasions, as if they alone cou'd unlock the Secrets of the Almighty, and were the Privy-Councillors of Heaven. No Man's *Misfortune* shall escape their *Censure*, but forgetting what our Saviour said of those on whom the Tower of Siloam fell, they condemn all alike, and presume to distribute the *Divine Justice* by their own false *Weights* and *Measures*. I am  
in  
Santob

in Love with that Saying of Plato; *There is no Envy in the Deity.* Assuredly that Immense Ocean of Goodness never ceases to shew'r down his Favours and Blessings on all that are capable of receiving them, and he is not partial to any of his *Creatures*. Like the *Sun* he imparts his Influence to all the World, and if any rejoice not in his *Beams*, the *Cloud* that hinders them is of their own raising. Those Men will hardly proselyte me, who dress the *Deity* in a frightful *Figure*, and then wou'd persuade the World 'tis his *Essential Complexion*. While they exclaim against *Pictures* and *Images*, they themselves commit *Idolatry*: They set up an infinite Tyrant, morose, arbitrary and cruel, instead of the Original, In-created Beauty and Goodness, worshiping the *Idol* of their Imagination, instead of the Indulgent Father of all things.

I do not take Prayer to consist in babling o'er the devoutest *Collects* and *Oraisons* of the Church without a due *Application* of *Spirit*. This is the *Sacrifice of Fools*, without *Salt or Fire*; and therefore must needs be unsavory to *God*. The bended Knee, submis Looks, and even a Body prostrate to the Ground, unless accompanied with a proportionate *Fervour* and *Humility* of the *Soul*, are but Religious *Compliments*, and a Pious Banter. Such Mock-Addresses, I doubt, are not graciously receiv'd in the Court of *Heaven*.

AN  
Alsoq;

## 8 *The Religion of a Bookseller.*

AN equal Dislike I have for those who offer up strange and unhallowed Flames; burning Incense, whose *Composition* is not warrantable; who hold not fast the *Form* of sound Words, but giving the Reins to their *Tongue*, suffer it to commit a thousand Indecencies in the Hearing of Him who made the Ear. These, as well as the former, are guilty of *Crimen læsa Majestatis*; while they affront *Heaven* with *Tautologies* and vain *Repetitions*. The one through Inadvertency, the other through Presumption. This bringing *Form* without *Matter*, That offering *Matter* without *Form*; and Both wanting the *Spirit* and *Life* of sincere *Devotion*. Yet I neither censure such as use an *allowable Form*, provided it be accompanied with attentive Devotion; and less those who address themselves to *Heaven* in *Words of their own choosing*, provided it be season'd with Discretion and a modest Sobriety of *Spirit*. For when a Man fitly qualified, endued with Learning too, and above that, **adorn'd with a good Life**, breaks out into a warm and well deliver'd Prayer before his Sermon, it hath the Appearance of a Divine Rapture, he raiseth and leadeth the Hearts of the Assembly in another manner than the most composed or best studied Form of Words can ever do: And the **Pray-wees** who serve up all the Sermon with the same garnishing, would look like so many Statues, or Men of Straw in the Pulpit, compar'd with those who speak

speak with such a powerful Zeal, that Men are tempted at the Moment to believe Heaven it self hath directed their Words to them.

On the other side, I think not that to be the only Authentick Prayer, which is attended with Sensual Raptures, and melting Entertainments : This is but the Smoke of *Passion*, and soon vanishes; a mere Vapour or Ebullition, a pleasing Warmth of good Natures, and frequently the proper Result of a Sanguine Complexion.

*Prayer is the Exaltation of the Soul, the Flight of a Sublimated Spirit : It makes Man an Angel pro Tempore, while his abstracted Mind takes the Wing, and soars aloft, hovering on the Borders of Paradice. He then breathes immortal Airs, burns like a Seraphim, and flames out with Holy and defecate Fires, like the most extasi'd Orders of the Cœlestial Court.*

FOR my own part, I can Pray Kneeling, Standing, or Sitting ; either at my Businels, or at my Repast ; with or without Words and Ceremonies. And this I take to be the only Method of complying with St. Paul's Counsel, when he bids us Pray without ceasing. A swift and Pious Ejaculation many Times does the Office of a Multitude of Words (tho' the most apposite and elegant in Human Language) since God understands the Dialect of the Heart as well as that of the Tongue, being the Architect of both.

## 10 *The Religion of a Bookseller.*

THE Posture which *Pythagoras* enjoin'd his Disciples, when they appeared before the Gods, was not without a *Mystery*. He bid them hold their Tongues revers'd; intimating thereby that they should observe a devout Silence in such Tremendous Company, and utter no Words which were not dipt in the Heart. And I could wish the Advice of *Solomon*, instead of a *Nesce Teipsum*, were engraven on the *Frontispiece* of our *Churches*.

" My Son, when thou enterest the House of  
" God, let thy Words be few, and be more  
" ready to hear, than to offer the Sacrifice of  
" Fools." In all this, I aim at a *Devotion* that is *Masculine* and *Solid*; *Discreet* and *Humble*, *Sincere* and *Modest*; full of *Primitive Reverence*, and the *Fervor* of the first Ages.

IN proper speaking our very silent Necessities are eloquent *Prayers*, and the Wants which are hardest to be uttered, are such a prevailing *Rhetorick with God*, as oft times bring down swifter Relief from *Heaven*, than our loudest *Letanies*. Even we our selves are more apt to dispose of our Alms to a dumb Person, who by being disabled to make his Address **any other ways** than by mute Signs, does by that Pathetick kind of *Complaint*, challenge our *Charity*, than to the common Beggars, who make a Trade of Haranguing People out of their *Money*. Indeed every Innocent Action of our Lives is a *Prayer*: But the more

more extraordinary Performances of *Heroick Virtue* pierce the Clouds, storm the Regions above, and plunder *Heaven* it self (if I may so speak) of its choicest *Blessings*.

As to *Publick Prayer*, I own there is a Necessity of using some *Forms* and *Ceremonies*; and those are the best which have the greatest Efficacy to excite and regulate our *Devotion*. Not too Pompous and Theatrical, nor slovenly and mean, but such as become the *House of God*, and give it an external *Beauty* not a mere *Pageantry* of *Holliness*.

THAT Custom of the *Greek*, and other *Eastern Churches* to separate the Men from the Women in the *Publick Assembly*, seems to have something of *Antiquity* for its Plea, tho' the Disuse of it in these *Western Parts* may make us think it a *Singularity*. I envy not that Sex the Liberty of worshipping *God*, and being present at the *Publick Solemnities*; yet I grudge them a Privilege which is so manifest an Impediment to our *Devotion*, as is their prating over the *Psalms*, *Responses* and other Portions of the *Common-Prayer*. I cou'd stand beside the fairest of that Sex in the *Church* unmov'd as *Marble*, their brightest Charms serving but as *Foils* to set off the incomparable Eminency of that *Majesty* and *Glory* who is adored in that Place. But when I hear them break the Bounds of *Female Modesty*, whose greatest Ornament is *Silence*;

## 12 · *The Religion of a Bookseller.*

when I hear their Tongues running over the *Prayers* as loud, if not louder than the Men, either with a careleſs Wantonnes, or affected Gravity, their Eyes divided betwixt an amorous Glance and a devout Ogle. This, I must confes, gives me Offence ; 'tis an Obſtacle to my Devotion, and makes me think the *Grecians* are not without Reason in assigning a particular Place of the *Church* to the *Women*, where they can neither be ſeen or heard. And this will not ſeem uncourtly or auſtere, if we remember that St. *Paul* himſelf has ſaid, I permit not a Woman to ſpeak in the *Church*. And in another Place, Let Women have Pow-er on their Heads [that is, be covered or veiled] because of the Angels, or as ſome interpret it, because of the young Men.

I wish for a purer *Reformation* in the *Church* than we have hitherto ſeen ; yet I am not for tearing up *Christianity* by the Roots. I could be glad to ſee the *House of God* purged and cleaſed, the Building Repair'd and Beautified without Removing it from the *Foundations*. The Office of a *Bishop* and a *Presbyter*, to me, ſeems no other ways differenc'd than thus ; I look upon a *Presbyter* as a *Parochial Bishop*, and a *Bishop* as a *Dioceſan Presbyter*. Their Dignity equal in *Quality*, tho' not in *Quan-ti-ty*. The one has Power of admiſſing the *Sacraments* as well as the other : Only for the ſake of *Order* and good *Government* in the *Church*, one is invested with a *Jurisdi-ction*

*ction and Superiority*, of which the other is as capable, if duly elected to it.

I envy not the *Bishops* or *Ruling Presbyters*, their Temporal Honours and Riches, neither wou'd I be a Leveller in the *Church of God*: Yet it were a desirable thing, if there were a more equal Distribution of Ecclesiastical Benefices, that the poorest *Preaching Presbyter* might have an Income that should free Him from the Temptation of envying a *Journey-man Carter*, and other inferior Trades, who many Times can boast of a larger Stipend than some of the *Ministry*.

**Pluralities** and Non-Residents were never heard of in the Primitive Ages, and it is a Shame there should be so many fat Parsonages, and yet so many *lean Parsons*. It is the Devil's Market where Church-Livings are bought and sold, and such *Spiritual Hucksters* deserve to be whipt out of the *Temple*.

I refuse not to bow at the *Name of Jesus*, yet can give no Reason why I should not as well bow at the *Name of Joshua*, they being both one and the same in the *Hebrew*. And that Scripture, which is made to countenance this Ceremony, seems to me to speak no more than that in the *Name of Christ* all Addresses should be made to *God the Father*. For if it were to be literally taken, why do they, who so receive it, bow the *Head* instead of the *Knee*? Besides, I see no Reason why I shou'd not also bow at the *Name of Messias, Christ*,

14 *The Religion of a Bookseller.*

*Christ, Emmanuel*, since the Redeemer of the World is called by all these *Names*? Nay, why should not I pay the same Reverence to all the *Names of God* in all Languages; especially to that tremendous Name *Jehovah*, which the *Jews* think it unlawful to utter? 'Tis true indeed, I can comply with the Custom of the *Church* in a thing not directly opposite to any positive Command, but I protest at the same time, my Wishes are, that a Custom acknowledg'd to be indifferent, even by those who most zealously plead for its Practice, were rather disus'd, than impos'd on Men of tender *Consciences*, since it gives so much *Scandal*, and has no *Authority* but that of *Tradition* to back it.

I am naturally a Lover of *Musick*, and believe it has an Efficacy in composing or ruffling the Spirits, according to the various kinds of it. But I find its most immediate Operation is on the *Fancy* and sensual Affections, not on the *Superiour Faculties* of the Soul. And therefore I see no Use of it in the *Church*, where we come not to pay Homage to *God* in the Strength of an exalted Imagination, or to present him with the *First-Fruits* of our *Passions*, tho' never so refin'd, but to offer up our selves a *Living Sacrifice*, which is our Rational Service, since *God* is to be worship'd in *Spirit and Truth*, and not with airy *Notions*, and carnal Raptures.

THO'

THO' the *Ear* is a Member consecrated to the Service of *Religion*, since *Faith* comes by *Hearing*, yet I cannot observe that my *Faith* is at any Time encreas'd by the most Harmonious Lessons on the *Organ* or other Instruments of *Musick* used in Divine Service. Neither do I admire at the Country-man's Freak, who the first Time he had ever been in a Cathedral, hearing the Organ strike up, fell a dancing as tho' he had been in a *Musick-house*. To speak freely, I know not why we may not praise *God* as effectually in a *Dance* as with *Musick*, since the *Jews*, from whom we borrow our Arguments for the latter, did as usually practise the former; there being but little Use of the one without the other. To me a Chapter in the Bible is the best *Musick* in the World, and no Melody like that of a good *Sermon*, where the Preacher, like a skilful Artist, reconciles the Discords of the *Law* and the *Gospel*, and between the Emblems and Types of the one, and the Substantial *Truths* and *Mysteries* of the other, strikes up such a grateful *Harmony*, as far exceeds the best *Consort* in the World, tho' it were as charming as *Nebuchadnezzar's*, and made up of the whole Family of *Musick*.

So I am a great Admirer of good *Painting* and *Sculpture*, yet can never find them Helps, but Hinderances to my *Devotion*, since it is impossible for the greatest Master that ever profess'd those *Arts*, to draw or carve to the *Life*,

## 16 The Religion of a Bookseller.

Life, what was never expos'd to any of his Senses, or to contrive a *Figure* of that which has no Resemblance, the *Invisible Divinity*. Indeed a Man's own *Fancy* in such Cases is the best Painter; and if it be lawful to make use of any *Pictures* or *Images*, 'tis of such as our own Imagination frames; yet this is the way to become *Anthropomorphites*, and worship *God* under the *Similitude* of a Man, or to follow the Pagan Vanities, and adore Him under the Likeness of a Beast, or some other sensible *Figure*, since all the *Ideas* of that *Mimick Faculty*, are but the Transcripts of external Objects, Aristotle's Maxim being truer of this than of the *Intellect*, That there is nothing in it which was not first in the *Sense*. The only way to have a true *Idea* of *God* is to suppress the Operations of this busie *Faculty*, and by withdrawing into the most inward Recesses of the Mind, there, as in a *Mirrour*, to contemplate that *Infinite Essence*, who is hid behind Himself (if I may so speak) and cannot be discover'd but by his *Back-parts*.

IT is with Pleasure that I behold Him in his *Rays*, which shine in all his Works, and he has cast his *Shadow* throughout the Universe, but I should be oppress'd with *Glory*, were I capable of fixing my Eyes on that *Abyss* of *Splendors*, before which the most Illustrious Spirits in *Heaven* cover their Faces, as if they were ashame'd of their comparative Imperfections,

tions, and were not able to behold that Original and Increased Purity without a Blush.

I have no Ambition to become an *Eagle* in *Divinity*, neither do I emulate the towering Flights of such as pretend to extraordinary *Revelations*. I had rather walk under the *Piazzas* of God's *Church*, than on the *Battlements* of the Devil's *Chappel*, lest my Head should grow giddy with *Enthusiasms*, and I be blown off from those Heights and Pinnacles with some Wind of vain *Doctrine*. That Father of the *Arrian Heresy* was an *Icarus* in *Religion*, he had lofty Thoughts and soaring Speculations, but he flew without a Guide, he forsook the Path of his *Mother the Church*, his Wings melted, and he had a terrible *Fall*, which at once bereft him of his *Life*, and ('tis to be fear'd) of his *Salvation*.

I take great Pleasure sometimes to find my self intangled in *Difficulties* and *Dangers*, out of which I have no *Skill* to extricate my self. I never think my self safer than in such a *Labyrinth* of thwarting Events, as no *Clue* of my own *Reason* or *Experience* can lead me out. 'Tis then I can be cheerful and triumph, knowing my Deliverance is near at hand. And herein lies the *Quintessence* of my *Comfort*, that I am thus particularly, and demonstratively assur'd of the Divine *Favour* and *Protection*, since nothing below a *Miracle* of *Providence* could untie so knotty a Juncture of *Misfortunes*.

## 18 *The Religion of a Bookseller.*

WERE all the Passages of my *Life* publish'd, it wou'd be taken for more than a *Romance*. It is so full of Adventures which surpass the Stories of *Gyants, Monsters, Enchanted Castles*, and the whole System of *Knight Errantry*. Such strange and unexpected Escapes as I have made from the very *Jaws of Death*, exceed the Fables of *Poets*. And had I no other Reason but the Remembrance of my own *Perils* and *Deliverances*, it were more than enough to convince me of an unerring Eye that watches over *Mankind*. This makes me cheerful and easy in all human Circumstances, and reconciles me to the *Stoicks*. I look on all Things to be govern'd by a fix'd *Law* and *Eternal Destiny*; and therefore cou'd quietly sit down with *George Withers*, and say, *Nec habeo, nec careo, nec curo*. I consider my self as a *Part* of the *Universe*, and therefore am never troubled at any thing which happens to me, since it comes not to pass without the Knowledge and Will of him who in all his Dispensations has Regard to the *Good* of the *Whole*; from which I am not excluded as a *Member*, and therefore must needs participate of the *Common Benefit*, even when I think I suffer *Damage*. I am not peevish at a *Calumny*, nor waspish at a *Loss*. When any one does me an *Injury*, I take a singular Pleasure in forgiving him. There is such a Noble *Pride* attends this generous *Conquest* of an *Enemiy*, as far surpasses the celebrated

Sweet-

*Sweetness of Revenge.* I hate to gratify my *Passion* the common way ; and because he has acted the Part of an ill Man, I must do so too or worse, by giving scope to my *Rage*, and executing the severest Dictates of my *Fury*. He is but a *Tinker* in *Morality*, who to repair one Breach, makes another, and perhaps wider than the first. Besides, 'tis the most profitable kind of *Revenge*, when I turn a *Wrong* to an *Advantage*, by cancelling it ; since thereby I make a *Friend* of an *Enemy* : And if he have but the least Spark. of *Gratitude* and *Virtue*, my Benignity makes him not only blush at his Offence, but puts him upon some ingenuous Study how to make amends.

HATH any wrong'd thee ? (says  
\* *Quarls*) be bravely reveng'd,  
slight it, and the Work's begun,  
forgive it, and 'tis finish'd. *He is below himself that is not above an Injury.*

If thy Brother hath privately offended thee, reprove him privately, and having lost himself in an Injury, thou shall find him in thy Forgiveness. *He that rebukes a private Fault openly, sordidly betrays it rather than reproves it.* The true way to advance another's Virtue, is to follow it, and the best Means to cry down another's Vice, is to decline it.

HAVE any wounded thee with *Slanders*? Meet them with Patience, hasty Words ranckle the Wound, soft Language dresses it, Forgiveness cures it, Oblivion takes away the Scar. It is

\* See his Enchiridion.

## 20 The Religion of a Bookseller.

more noble by Silence to cover an Injury, than by Argument to overcome or spread it. But in all Cases of this Nature change Conditions with thy Brother, then ask thy Conscience what thou would'st be done to, being resolv'd, exchange again, and do thou the like to him, and thy Christianity shall never err.

I esteem it one of the most substantial Exercises of Religion, to subdue our Passions; and because Anger is the most violent and precipitate, I use my most strenuous Endeavours to stifle this in its Embryo. Other Passions take a gradual Rise, and insinuate by Steps, but Wrath, like Gun-powder, takes Fire all at once, and blows a Man up before he can look about him. Therefore I have by long and assiduous Practice labour'd to get the Victory of this turbulent Affection, and I count it the Masterpiece of Human Wit to be above all Provocation. I cou'd long ago stop my Hand in the midst of its Career, when aim'd at a faulty Servant, or scurrilous Companion, but now I can bridle the Nerves which wou'd have stretch'd it forth, and curb the officious Spirits which were so ready to sally forth on such an Occasion. I scorn to suffer my Tongue to be my Hand's Deputy, and to lavish out in unseemly Expressions, as if the Height of Man's Wit and Valour lay in a biting Repartee. Nay, I will not permit so much as my Cheek to change Colour, my Eye to sparkle, or any other Part of my Face to receive the

least Impression of my *Resentments*, whereby it may be perceived that I am fermented. Yet at the same Time I am not insensible of an *Affront*, nor void of due Reflection on it. All that I aim at, is to comply with the *Apostle's Advice*, *To be angry, and not to sin.*

I have no Pannick Fears of *Death* upon me, neither am I sollicitous, how or when I shall make my *Exit* from the Stage of this *Life*. Much less do I trouble my self about the manner of my *Burial*, or to which of the *Elements* I shall commit my *Carkass*. I envy not the *Funeral State* of Great Men, neither do I covet the *Embalming* of the *Egyptians*. I wonder at the Fancy of those who desire to be imprison'd in leaden *Coffins* till the *Resurrection*, and to protract the *Corruption* of their *Flesh*, out of which they shall be generated *de Novo*; as if they dreamt of rising whole as they lay down, and carrying *Flesh* and *Blood* into the *Kingdom of Heaven*, without a *Change*.

For my part, I admire the *Indian Obsequies*, and were it not against the long establish'd Custom of my Country, wou'd sooner bequeath my Body to the *Fire*, than be *inhum'd*, that so I might be sooner resolv'd into the *Elements* of which I was first compounded.

YET instead of that nearer Way to Dissolution, I can be contented to undergo the tedious

## 22 *The Religion of a Bookseller.*

dious Conversation of *Worms* and *Serpents*, those greedy *Tenants* of the *Grave*, who will never be satisfied till they have eat up the *Ground-Landlord*.

I do not puzzle my self with projecting how my *Scattered Ashes* shall be collected together, neither do I for that Reason take Care for an *Urn* to enclose them. I am satisfied, that at the last *Trumpet*, I shall rise with the same *Individual Body* I now carry about me, tho' there may not then be one of the same *Individual Atoms* to make it up, which are its present Ingredients. For neither are they the same now as they were twenty Years ago. Yet I may be properly said to have the same *Individual Body* at this Hour, which my Mother brought forth into the World, tho' it is manifest, that there is so vast an *Accession* of other *Particles* since that Time, as are enough to make *Ten* such *Bodies* as I had then. Which implies such a perpetual *Flux* of the former, as 'twould be a *Solecism* in *Philosophy* to think I have one of my *Infant Atoms* now left about me. If after all this, I may be still said to have the same *Individual Body* as I had then, tho' there be not one of the same *Individual Atoms* left in its Composition, why may we not assert the same of the *Bodies* we shall have after the *Resurrection*? Matter is one and the same in all *Bodies*; the *Individuation* of it, the *Meum* and *Tuum* proceeds only from the infinitely different *Forms*

Forms which actuate it. Thus when my Soul at the Resurrection, either by its own Energy, or by the Power of God, and Assistance of Angels, shall be reinvested with a Body, it is proper to say it will be the same Individual Body I have now, tho' made up of Atoms which never before were Ingredients of my Composition, since not the Matter but the Form gives a Title to Individuation.

I am the more willing to believe this will be the Manner of our Resurrection, because I think it not Decorous to put the Angels on the Drudgery of Scavengers, as if it should at that Day be their Employment to sweep the Graves and Charnel-Houses, to sift the Elements, and rake in all the Receptacles of the Dead, for Mens divided Dust. Not that I think it impossible for God even this way to accomplish the Resurrection of the Dead; tho' the Bodies of all Mankind were crumbled into Dust, and that Dust scatter'd before the Wind, or distill'd into Water, or attenuated into Air, or tho' those Bodies were eaten by the Beasts of the Earth, or the Fish of the Sea, and those Beasts and Fish eaten again by Men. Tho' they should undergo all these Changes and Transmigrations, yet were they still in the great Repository of God. The whole World in this Sense being but as one great Store-house, and all the Elements as so many Cells therein; so that wheresoever we shall be laid up, whether in the Bellies of Fishes,

## 24 The Religion of a Bookseller.

*Fishes, Entrails of Beasts, or by various Alterations become the Food of Men, yet the Great Architect of all Things knows where to find our scattered Remnants.* But why should we engage Him in so infinite a Task, when the Work may as well be done a nearer way? And put him to the Expence of multiplying Miracles, when fewer will serve the Turn? When the Grand Alarm is given, He can soon fit our Souls with proper Matter for their future Bodies, out of the Elements, as well as out of their own Antiquated Embers. The Jewish Rabbins seem to deny the gathering together our dispers'd Ashes, and assign the Trouble to a certain small Bone in every Man's Back, which, they say, never suffers any Putrefaction, but remaining to the last Day in its primitive Consistency, impassible and incorruptible, is then impregnated by a Dew from Heaven, which diffusing its Virtue like a Ferment, not only animates and quickens this Seminal Bone, but also attracts all the Atoms, which formerly constituted the Body, tho' dispers'd in the remotest Corners, and most hidden Recesses of the Universe, maralling them in the same Order as they had before their Dissolution, and so in a Moment recovering the Body to its Primitive State. But these are gross Conceits for Christians, who believe that our Bodies shall in that great and Final Change become Spiritual and Immortal,

tal, being for ever divested of all the peculiar Circumstances of Flesh, and Blood.

LET the Manner be how it will please God, I am ravish'd to think what a bright and serene Morning the Resurrection will prove after the long Night of Death, and the languishing Slumbers of the Grave! How vigorous and active we shall rise from our Beds of Darkness, how merry and blithe from the melancholy Regions of Horror and Silence! More sprightly than Youth; stronger than Lions; and swifter than Eagles! full of Light, full of Joy, we shall soar aloft, and like well-mounted Travellers post it away through the Balmy Air, and liquid Skies, till we arrive at the Place of admirable Mansions, and be welcom'd to the House of God.

I dare not with some of the Jewish Rabbins say that all shall not rise at the great Day; much less will I presume with others to particularize so far as to exclude all those who perish'd in Noah's Flood; or with a third sort to confine the Resurrection to the Children of Israel, as if we that are of the Gentiles were not capable of it as well as they! But above all I reject the Censure of the Talmudists, who say, that neither Bilha the Concubine of Jacob that lay with Reuben; nor Doeg that caused Saul to kill Abimilech and the Priests; nor Gehazi the Servant of Elijah the Prophet, nor Achitophel, David's Prime Minister of State, shall rise from the Dead. These are the Me-

## 26 The Religion of a Bookseller.

moirs of Hebrew Superstition; invidious Remarks, the peculiar Heresy of that over-weening Nation.

YET I am more scandaliz'd at some Christians who will not allow Salvation to any Man that is not within the visible Pale of their Church, as if the Eternal Sun of Justice were eclips'd to all that are out of their narrow Horizon. Surely he enlightens every Man that comes into this World, and his Rays are not confin'd to Countries or Parties. He shines Universally, and no Man can trace him in the Zodiack of his Mercy.

I dare not, 'tis true, (with Justin Martyr) canonize the Philosophers, and place Socrates and Heraclitus in Heaven; neither am I sure that Aristotle, by his learned Treatises of Heaven, has obtain'd an Inheritance there himself. 'Tis too officious a Regard, and too bold a Charity, thus happily to dispose of particular Men. On the other side I dread to pass the Sentence of Damnation on all the ancient Pagans, and to aver that none were saved that died before the fifteenth Year of Tiberius. Tho' the mere Light of Natural Reason was not sufficient to conduct them, nor all their Morality enough to entitle them to Supreme Felicity; yet I cannot be persuaded that the infinite Goodness would doom the virtuous Gentiles to the Abyss of Misery. Neither can any Man demonstrate, That Christ was not the Light of the Gentiles before his Incar-

Incarnation, as well as after : And since Abraham saw his Day and was glad, how do we know that *Plato*, *Solon*, *Lycurgus*, *Pythagoras*, *Cyrus*, and other wise Law-givers, Philosophers and Kings, Men renown'd for their Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, Chastity, Liberality, and the like Virtues, might not also be favour'd with a Glimpse of the *Messias*, the *Desire of all Nations*, before he appear'd in the Flesh. Tho' we have no Records in *Scripture* of *Hermes Trismegistus*, *Zoroaster*, *Phocilides*, *Homer*, *Theognes*, *Epictetus*, *Theseus* and *Heracles*, yet we cannot be assured, but that they had *Faith*, and expected the *Redeemer* to come, as well as *Job*, who was not of the *Holy Line*, but a *Branch* of the *Gentiles*.

WHEN I consider what Pains some of the wiser Heathens have taken to find out the Truth ; when I contemplate a *Pythagoras* travelling through *Asia*, and particularly conversant in *Palestine* ; an *Empedocles* Journeying into *Africk*, to learn the Wisdom of the *Ægyptians* ; an *Alexander the Great* falling at the Feet of the Hebrew High-Priest, I cannot think the Heathen World to be so ignorant of the true *Religion*, as is commonly imagin'd. They had a *Balaam* to instruct them, the *Sibylls* to guide them to the Knowledge of a future *Messias*, and for ought I know, some of them might have the *Scriptures* of the Old Testament too, or at least a good Part of them, even before that celebrated Translation of the  
OBELIS

## 28 *The Religion of a Bookseller.*

Septuagint was extant; since it was easy for those *Gentiles* who had Commerce with the *Jews* to procure Copies of their *Law*, especially when they were made Captives in *Media, Assyria, Egypt and Babylon.*

AN *Esther* lying in the Bosom of *Ahasuerus*, a *Daniel* sitting at the Right Hands of *Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzer, and Darius*, had fair Opportunities of instructing those *Heathen Monarchs* in the *Mysteries* of the *Mosaic Law*, and surely such Holy Persons wou'd never neglect so noble a Work as proselyting the Kings and Princes of the *Gentiles* to *God*.

IN the Days of *Solomon* the Fame of the *Jewish Nation* had reach'd the utmost Parts of the *Earth*, *Kings* came from far, and *Queens* from the remotest Borders of the *Continent*, to be the *Disciples* of that Royal *Philosopher*, and *Spectators* of the *Hebrew Grandeur*. How could then the *Divine Oracles* be hid from the *Gentiles*, or the *Sacred Tradition* of *Shiloh* to come, not be deliver'd to the inquisitive *Nations of the Earth*! Without doubt the *East* saw the dawning of the *Star of Jacob*, and the *South* could calculate his *Meridian*, even before he rose. Neither were the *North* and the *West* without some Glimmerings of his Appearance.

THE *Wise Men* that came to adore him at *Bethlehem*, perform'd but the Wishes of their *Fathers*, and the *Eunuch of Queen Candace's* made

made no Scruple to become a *Christian*, when *Philip* had convinc'd him that *He*, of whom the *Prophets* had so long foretold, was now come in the *Flesh*. Surely he was the *desired of Nations*, the *Hope* of the *Gentiles*, as well as the *Glory* of his People *Israel*. Therefore I cannot number it among the *Comme-  
dations of Christianity*, that a great Part of those who profess that *Name*, are so presump-  
tuously uncharitable, as to damn all that were not of the Seed of *Abraham* before *Christ* came in the *Flesh*, as if Salvation were entail'd to one *Family*, and no Man could go to *Heaven* that was not circumcis'd.

MUCH rather had I believe, That in the very Instant of Death, *God* reveal'd the *Mystery of Redemption* to many innocent and virtuous Persons among the *Gentiles*, and infus'd a saving *Faith* in *Christ* into their Souls, at the very Moment that their Senses were forsaking their Bodies: Supplying their Want of *Scripture* or *Tradition*, with the Inspiration of his *Holy Spirit*, when they were taking the last *Gasp*, and breathing out their own.

OR, if this be not thought sufficient, I will believe, That when *Christ* descended into *Hell*, he preached the *Gospel* to the *Spirits* which were there in Prison, not only those who were disobedient in the Days of *Noah*, but all such of the Race of *Noah* as by compleat-  
ing the Measure of their Sins had sunk them-  
selves into that fatal *Place*, whether they were  
*Jews*

30 *The Religion of a Bookseller.*

Jews or Heathens. And I cannot understand those Texts of Scripture which mention his spoiling of Hell, and leading Captivity Capture, if they may not be applied to his Triumphant Deliverance of some of those Souls which were shut up in the Infernal Caverns. Neither do I perceive any Heresy in believing, there might be some Virtuous Heathens in the Retinue he carried with Him from thence to Heaven, as well as some of the Sons of Israel. However, leaving the Manner of their Salvation to God, I will conclude, That it is unreasonable, uncharitable, and has too much of the Jew in it, to pass the Sentence of Damnation on all the Gentiles, since the Holy Ghost has assured us, That God is no Respecter of Persons, but he that in every Nation fears Him, and works Righteousness, is accepted of Him.

BESIDES, methinks if Matters were brought to the severest Balance, it would not appear Heterodox to say, That as all Men sin'd in Adam, without their own personal Knowledge or Consent, so some might be saved in Christ, even without a particular and personal Belief in Him, of whom perhaps they never so much as heard.

SOME Grains of Allowance may be given to the involuntary *Frailities* of *Human Nature*, some Indulgence granted to the invincible Ignorance of a great Part of *Adam's Posterity*, who, if they knew not the High-way to Heaven

ven

ven which was reveal'd to their Brethren the Jews and Christians, might yet be conducted thither by some By-Path, since it is too narrow a Conceit of God's Mercy to think, that because he had chiefly manifested it in the Royal Road of the Law and the Gospel, therefore he cou'd never go out of the beaten Tract. This were to retrench the Divine Prerogative, and to tye Him up to limited Conditions, whose Ways are in the Great Deep, and whose Foot-steps no Created Being can trace.

THE Satisfaction I have of the Soul's Immortality, if it amounts not to a Demonstration, may yet be numbred among those Proleptick Ideas that need none, as being self-evident. It is a Parallel with first Principles, and has equal Force on my Understanding; for I am not more convinc'd, *That one and two make three*, than *That the Soul of Man is Immortal*. So that I make it not so much an Article of my Faith, as a Proposition of my Reason, and a Conclusion of Science. Yet I do not always go so far round about, as by a long Train of Logical Deductions and Inferences, to dispute my self into the Remembrance of my Immortality. This indeed were necessary to persuade another, but I have a nearer Method to comfort my self with the Demonstration of this Noble Truth, while it becomes an Object of my very Sense, and I can feel that Immortality in my self, which my Reason tells me another is

32 *The Religion of a Bookseller.*

is possess'd of as well as I. This is easier to be experienc'd, than utter'd in Words, 'tis an *Art* not to be acquir'd without assiduous *Reflection* and strict *Animadversion* on our own *Thoughts*. But the *Fatigue* is more than recompenc'd with the ineffable *Pleasure* that attends it, for when by a long and often repeated Practice, a Man has found the Way to keep close Pace with his own *Intellect* in all its *Flights* and abstracted *Starts* from the *Body*, when he can stand on the Brink of the *Immaterial World* and perceive what is before Him, perceiving also that he perceives it, then 'tis he enjoys *Heaven* by Anticipation, and foretells his *Future Beatitude* by tasting *Immortality* at present. He is risen from the Dead, before he dies; and lives an *Eternity* of Ages in a *Moment*. Neither is this a sleeping *Chimera*, or a waking *Dream*, but a real Truth, which, as I have said, is easier practised than expressed.

It was but a drowsy Conceit in those Fathers, who fancy'd the *Soul* should sleep in the *Grave* till the *Resurrection* of the *Body*. Had they well traced the *Nature* of a *Spirit* from its first *Principles*, they would not have provided a *Dormitory* for That *Being* which wou'd cease to be, shou'd it cease to act, since its very *Essence* implies a Contradiction to Rest. I cou'd as easily and with equal Reason believe it will be *annihilated* at its Separation from the *Body*, or at least that it shall be *metamorphos'd*.

phos'd into something else, since if it continue the same it was before the Dissolution of the Body, it must continue to think, it being indeed nothing else but a pure Thought; and how a Thought can take a Nap, is beyond the Verge of my Philosophy to apprehend, neither do I know of any thing in Divinity that seems to countenance so dull a Theorem. As for those Texts of Scripture, which seem to admiraliate the Supreme Felicity of the Saints by the Notion of Rest, I do not think they mean a Cessation of the Soul's natural Energy, for how could it then be capable of that Seraphick Love, and Joy in the Beatifick Vision, which is the chief Entertainment of the Blessed in Heaven? It seems rather to intimate the Soul's Escape and Deliverance from the Troubles and Inquietudes of this Mortal Life, which may very well be call'd a Rest, and yet be consistent with an Activity far surpassing that which it was endued with in the Flesh. The Scripture clothes many abstruse Mysteries in familiar Dresses, the better to accommodate them to the Conceptions of vulgar and ignorant People, who make up far the greatest Part of Mankind, and we must not expect the rigid Definitions of Aristotle from the Sacred Pen-Men. But when we come Scientifically, and according to the Method of the Schools to treat of the Natures of Things, we ought to fit them with proper and Intelligible Terms,

## 34 The Religion of a Bookseller.

and pursue their *Essences* by a continued Progress, not by wild Fits and Starts.

I have but small Acquaintance with the future State, but this I'm sure there will be no Change that will be so surprising to me as that **By Death.** It is a thing of which I know but little, and none of the Millions of Souls that have past into the *invisible* World, have come again to tell me how it is.

### I.

*It must be done (my Soul) but 'tis a strange,  
A Dismal and Mysterious Change, Norris.  
When thou shalt leave this Tenement of Clay,  
And to an unknown somewhere wing away ;  
When Time shall be Eternity, and thou  
Shalt be thou know'st not what, and live thou  
(know'st not how.*

### II.

*Amazing State! no Wonder that we dread*

*To think of Death, or view the Dead,  
Thou'rt all wrapt up in Clouds, as if to thee  
Our very Knowledge had Antipathy.*

*Death could not a more sad Reint're find,  
Sickness and Pain before, and Darkness all be-  
hind.*

*III.* *Some courteous Ghost, tell this great Secrecy,  
What 'tis you are and we must be.*

*You*

## The Religion of a Bookseller. 35

You warn us of approaching Death, and why  
May we not know from you what 'tis to dye?  
But you, having shot the Gulph, delight to see  
Succeeding Souls plunge in with like Uncertain-  
(ty.)

### IV.

When Life's close Knot by Writ from Destiny,  
Disease shall cut, or Age unty;  
When after some Delays, some dying strife,  
The Soul stands shivering on the ridge of Life.  
With what a dreadful Curiosity  
Does she launch out into the Sea of vast Eterni-  
(ty.)

### V.

So when the spacious Globe was delug'd o'er,  
And lower Holds could save no more,  
On th'utmost Bough th' astonish'd Sinners stood,  
And view'd th' Advances of th' encroaching  
(Flood.)

O'er-topp'd at length by th' Elements encrease,  
With Horror they resign'd to the untry'd Abyss.

IT is very desirable to know in what Condition our Souls will be when they leave the Body, and what is the Nature of that Abode into which we must go, but which we never saw into; and through what Regions we must then take our Flight, and after what Manner this will be done. 'Tis certain my Soul will then preserve the Faculties that are natural to

## 36 The Religion of a Bookseller.

it, viz. to understand, to will, to remember, as 'tis represented to us under the Parable of *Dives* and *Lazarus*: But alas! we little know how the People of the *disembodied Societies* act, and will, and understand, and communicate their Thoughts to one another, and therefore I long to know it. What Conception can I have of a separated Soul (says a late Writer) but that *'Tis all Thought.*

I firmly think when a Man's Body is taken from him by Death, he is turn'd into all *Thought* and *Spirit*. How great will be its Thought when it is without any Hinderance from these material Organs that now obstruct its Operations. In that *Eternity* (as one expresses it) the whole Power of the Soul runs together one and the same way.

\* Beverley's  
great Soul of Man.  
pag. 292.

In Eternity the Soul is united in its Motions, which way one Faculty goes all go, and the Thoughts are all concentrated as in one *whole Thought* \* of Joy or Torment.

THESE Things have occasion'd great *Variety of Thoughts* in me, and my Soul when it looks towards the other World, and thinks it self near it, can no more cease to be inquisitive about it, than it can cease to be a Soul.

I am not at all edified in the *Notion* of the *Blessed Trinity*, by the Sight of a *Triangle*, neither can the whole *System* of the *Mathematicks* improve my Knowledge in this Point of *Divinity*. The three distinct *Faculties* of a

Human

Human Soul are far from illustrating to me the Three Persons in One Essence, since there is a Subordination in the Former, whereas there is an Equality in the Latter. Such Similitudes and Comparisons seem not to me a Stenography or short Characters, but a false Spelling in Divinity. And tho' to wiser Reasons, and more Active Beliefs, they may serve as Luminaries in the Abyss of Knowledge, yet my Heavy Judgment will never be able to mount on such weak and brittle Scales and Roundels to the lofty Pinnacles of true Theology. All the Force of Rhetorical Wit has not Edge enough to dissect so tough a Subject, wherein the little obscure Glimmerings we gain of that Inaccessible Light, come not to us in direct Beams, but by the faint Reflections of a Negative Knowledge. And we can better apprehend what it is not, than what it is. In the Disquisition of his Works, I own, that those do highly magnify Him, whose Judicious Enquiry into his Acts, and deliberate Research into his Creatures return the Homage of a Devout and Learned Paraphrase. But in the Contemplation of that Eternal Essence to which no created Thought can be adequate, I will humbly sit down and silently admire, that which neither the Heart can conceive, nor the Tongue or Pen of Men or Angels can declare as they ought, and as it is.

I do not affect Rhodomontadoes in Religion, nor to boast of the Strength of my Faith: I

do

## 38 The Religion of a Bookseller.

do not covet Temptations, nor court Dangers: Yet I can exercise my *Belief* in the difficultest Point when call'd to it; and walk steadfast and upright in Faith, without the Crutch of a visible *Miracle*. I can firmly believe in *Christ*, without going in *Pilgrimage* to his *Sepulchre*, neither need I the Confirmation that was vouchsaf'd to St. *Thomas* that Proverb of *Unbelief*. However I do not bless myself, nor esteem my *Faith* the better, because I lived not in the Days of *Miracles*, nor ever saw *Christ* or any of his *Disciples*: Or because I was not one of his *Patients* on whom he wrought his *Wonders*. Both their *Faith* and mine were infus'd by the Ministrion of the *Senses*. And as they believe, because they saw, so I believe, because I hear (undeniable Witnesses give *Testimony* of) the same Matter of *Fact*. Nor do I esteem their *Faith* the more Extraordinary, who lived before his Coming, since they raised not a *Belief* of the future *Messias*, but on clear *Prophecies*, and most significant *Types*, being assured by the constant Stream of *Tradition* from Father to Son, that what God had predetermin'd and foretold to *Adam* in *Paradise*, to *Abraham*, to *Jacob*, and the *Prophets*, should infallibly be accomplish'd in the Fulness of Time. And I cannot see wherein their *Faith* had the Advantage of ours, that it should deserve to be esteem'd more Bold and Noble, since they had an *Isaiah* to preach the *Gospel* to them, who for

for the Eloquence of his Stile, his most accurate and particular Enarration of the Birth of Christ, has acquired the Title of the fifth Evangelist. 'Tis certain both their *Faith* and ours rests on the *Divine Revelation*, whether it consist in *Prophesy* of Things to come, or *History* of Things past. The ultimate Object of our *Belief* is one and the same, that is, the *Authority* of God. They had their *Sacraments* also to strengthen their *Faith* as well as we. They were *Baptized* in the *Cloud* and in the *Sea*, they had *Manna* from *Heaven*, and *Water* out of a *Rock* in the *Earth*. They all eat the same *Spiritual Meat*, and drank the same *Spiritual Drink*, as we, for they drank of the *Spiritual Rock* of Ages, that follow'd them, and that *Rock* was *Christ*.

I do not conclude from hence, That there is no Difference between the *Sacraments* of the *Law*, and those of the *Gospel*. Doubtless there is an Excellency in the Latter, to which the Former could not pretend. The *Elements* in Both are *Natural*, as *Water*, *Manna*, *Bread*, *Wine*, &c. so that in the *Exterior*, neither of Them has the Advantage of the other. They were both also Conduits of the same inward *Grace* and *Spirit*. Only herein lies the Difference, that the *Jews* had it but by Measure, whereas the *Christians* receive it in Abundance. They touch'd but the *Hem* of *Christ's Garment*, but we feed on his *Body* and *Blood*. They did but wade in the low

Ebb

## 40 The Religion of a Bookseller.

Ebb of Grace, whereas we swim in the high Tide and Over-flowings of the Holy Spirit. Before the Everlasting Sluces were drawn up; while the Heavens were kept shut, the Waters which are above the Heavens did but distil gently on Mankind. The Divine Influence came Drop by Drop, here a little and there a little. But when Christ had once ascended up on High, and open'd the Eternal Gates above, then he shovr'd down his Gifts upon Men, and let loose the Flood of Light and Grace, that so it might water the whole Earth, and make glad the City of God, which is the Christian Church.

THE Sacraments of Christianity are the Principal Channels through which Eternal Life is conveyed to our Souls. By Baptism we are transplanted from the Old Stock of the first Adam, and inoculated into Him who is the True Vine, in whom we grow up as Branches, receiving Nourishment and Encrease by the Eucharist, which conveys to us the vital Principles of Immortality and Salvation. I cannot speak of this tremendous Mystery, without a Circumlocution, nor think of it without a Rapture! It is such a Complex of Riddles, as it hath pos'd the stoutest Samsons of the Church to solve: He alone was able to think and speak aright of it in few Words, who, when he first instituted it, said, *This is my Body, This is my Blood.* That there is a real Change made in the outward Elements after the Words of Con-

Consecration are pronounced, is an Article of my Faith; but the Manner how *this Change* is effected, is no Query of my Philosophy. I had rather humbly believe what I cannot comprehend in this Venerable *Sacrament*, than suffer any vain Disquisitions to stagger my Faith. I see *Bread* and *Wine* both retaining the same Taste, Colour, and other natural Qualities of those Creatures. Therefore I conclude there is no *Alteration* made in that which is the Object of my *Senses*. The Change must be in the *Spiritual Part*, which only falls under the Intellect. And yet I believe this *Change to be Real*, tho' I cannot sensibly perceive wherein, or how 'tis produced. Far be it from me to enter into the Secret of those who make a mere *empty Figure* of the Blessed Sacrament; as if we were made Partakers only of mere *Natural Bread* and *Wine* in the Holy Communion. This is to follow the impious Steps of *Manicheus and Marcion*, who taught that our Saviour had only a Fantastick Figure of a Body, not a Real one; as if they thought the Blessed Virgin *Mary* brought forth nothing but a Shadow, because she was overshadow'd by the Holy Ghost. *This is to outstrip Judas, and begin where his Treason left off:* And as he sold his Master's Life, so we should rob the Church of his *Body and Blood*, which he bequeath'd to her in his last Supper. Doubtless his Body is in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, but not *Bodily*, or after a corporeal Manner,

not invested with all the gross Circumstances of *Flesh* and *Blood*, but after a Spiritual Manner, in a *Mystery* too profound for *Human Sense* or *Reason* to comprehend. I am extremely pleas'd with the Answer which Queen Elizabeth gave to the Bishop of *Winchester*, when he demanded her Opinion of the *Real Presence*, said she.

*'Twas God the Word that spake it,  
He took the Bread and brake it;  
And what the Word did make it,  
That I believe and take it.*

It was an ill-manner'd, as well as an envious Retort of him that stood by and said, Your Highness's Reply is like the *Delphick Oracle*, full of Ambiguous Subtilty: He had discover'd more Breeding and Charity, had he told her, That her Answer savour'd of his Wisdom, who, when tempted by the *Pharisees* with a Question concerning the Lawfulness of paying *Tribute to Cæsar*, took a Piece of Money and asked whose Image and Superscription was that stamped on it, they said, *Cæsar's*; He reply'd, *Give therefore to Cæsar, the Things that are Cæsar's, and to God the Things that are God's*. It is certainly a necessary piece of Prudence sometimes to obviate the *Trains* of an Enemy, with a witty Evasion; which may be done without denying the Truth, or violating one's Conscience. Those who wou'd  
*trepan*

*trepan a Man with Queries,* and make him a Transgressor for a Word, deserve to be paid in the same Coin, and by an *Ingenious adapting* of Words, and placing of Periods, be baffled in their Design, and sent away like Fools as they came, without any better Satisfaction than they could reap from *a Riddle*. In my Opinion it is but a *Pious Scepticism* to suspend our Thoughts from determining the particular Mode of Christ's being *present* in the Sacrament, since it is impossible ever to demonstrate so recondite a Secret, into which even the Angels themselves, those *perfect Intelligences* perhaps look with Admiration, without improving their Knowledge. It is sufficient to my *humble Faith*, that my Redeemer is there, and that when I worthily receive this Blessed Sacrament, I shall receive the Author of it into my Tabernacle, and be united to the Heavenly Spouse. This is the true *Hidden Manna* which nourishes both Angels and Men; This is the *Bread of Life*, which strengthens Man's Heart; This is the Wine which rejoiceth God and Man; This is that *Heavenly Morsel* which God has given us as an Antidote against the Dregs of that Venom we all derive from *Adam's* eating the forbidden Fruit.

AND he is a *kind Physician*, who, when nothing else in the Divine *Pharmacopœa* could be found available for so great a Cure, *applies his own Body*, to heal the Distempers of our Souls, and his Blood to restore the Spoils of

## 44 The Religion of a Bookseller.

*Human Nature.* None but the Favourites of the King of Heaven are admitted to this *Immortal Banquet*. None but such as have the Wedding Garment on, can have Acces to this Table of Delicacies, this Repast of Royal Dainties. Many indeed (and too many, 'tis to be feared) are licensed to come into the Kings Anti-Chambers, and to sit down in the Church and taste the outward Elements, but it is the Privilege of his Saints only to enter his Cabinet, and be Regal'd with the costly Entertainment of his Secret Table, and to partake in the New Wine of the Kingdom of Heaven.

A serious Christian once told me, that if ever he was like *Paul* taken up into the *Third Heaven*, it was when he first sat down at the Lord's Table.

THE Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper* is the nearest and *visiblest* Communion that can be had with God and Christ upon Earth. Here are the greatest Revivings and the sweetest Refreshings that a pious Soul is capable of on this Side Heaven it self. Other Duties seem to be our Work, this our *Meat and Wages*, other Duties are but preparative to this, *Baptism, Prayer, Preaching, Hearing, Meditating, Conferring*, are all ordained but to fit us for this high and mysterious *Ordinance*. Here you have all the Benefits of the Covenant of Grace, folded up in one Rite. Here is the whole Contrivance of *Salvation represented in a*

*little Bread and Wine,* whereby God invisibly seals up an Assurance of his everlasting Love upon our Hearts.

It is grown even to a Proverb, saith *Acosta*, among the poor *Indians* that have entertained the Faith, that *Qui Eucharistiam semel suscepit, &c. He must never more be unholy that hath once received the Holy Communion.*

As to the *Posture of Receiving*, I am not scrupulous, being willing to conform to the Custom of those with whom I communicate: I can receive on my *Knees* without Danger of Idolatry; or *Sitting*, without the Guilt of Contempt. This latter I esteem of greater Antiquity, it being the Posture wherein *Christ communicated to his Disciples* at the last Supper, unless it be said they *lay along* according to the Mode of the Eastern People in those Days. However I do not think the *Position* of the Body, but the Preparation of the Soul is required to render one a *Worthy Communicant* in these Holy Mysteries.

I censure not the Primitive Christians, nor those more *Modern* ones, who communicate frequently, yet I should be timorous to approach these *Holy Mysteries* too often, lest I should incur the Judgment which St. Paul has pronounced on those who *eat and drink unworthily*. I have Charity for others who celebrate this Sacrament monthly, weekly, or daily; but I should have little for my self, should I receive this tremendous Mystery of Life,

## 46 *The Religion of a Bookseller.*

Life, with less Preparation than were requisite to fit me for Death. It being in the Number of those Medicines which either Kill or Cure, according to the Constitution to which they are applied.

If we examine the Books of Physicians, those Registers of human Frailty and Mortality, we shall find no less than Six thousand Diseases on the Score, to which Man's Body is liable. And 'tis to be feared the Distempers of the Soul come not short of the Account. What is Pride but a Tympany? Lust but a Fever? Drunkenness but a Dropsey? Envy and Malice but the Consumption of the Soul? To obviate these and innumerable more spiritual Maladies, God has (as a Token of his infinite Bounty) given His Ministers Commission to dispense to the Sons of Men the Sacrament of his Body and Blood, as a divine Catholicon, or Cure for [all] the Diseases which are incident to our Souls, but with this Condition, That he who partakes of these Holy Mysteries unworthily, instead of being healed, does but increase his Malady, work it up to a dangerous Crisis, if not to a desperate Paroxysm, which affords no Hopes, but a fearful Expectation of Judgment to come. Cyprian tells us two remarkable Stories, that one coming to the Sacrament, after the Minister had given him the Bread, and he going to eat it, it stuck in his Throat, *Gladium sibi sumens non cibum*, saith he, he received his Bane instead

stead of Bread ; the other came and took the Bread into his Hand, and when he went to eat it, there was nothing but *Ashes in his Hand*. This Apprehension, I ingenuously declare, has had such *Influence* on me, as to restrain me long from approaching the *Holy Table*. I tremble at the Thought of *Eating and Drinking my own Damnation*, and of trampling under-foot the Blood of the *Eternal Testament*.

I love not to humour my *Spleen*, or gratify my *Hypocondria*, by inveighing against the Luxury of the present Age, as if it were worse than those of old, and that our *Fore-fathers* did not eat and drink to Excess as well as we : The present Intemperance of Mankind is but the *Transmigration of the former* : And our Posterity shall but act o'er the Patterns we set them. *Drunkenness is as old as Noah's Flood, and Epicurism begun with Adam*. The one had no sooner escaped the universal Inundation of *Water*, but he had like to have been drown'd in a *Deluge of Wine* : And the other not content with the large Indulgence and Commission God had given him to eat of the *Fruits of Paradise*, must needs *leap the Fence* which guarded the *Forbidden Tree* ; and when he might have banqueted without Satiety or End on the *Varieties* which would have given him *Life and Immortality*, he plays the Glutton, and surfeits himself with the Plant of Death and Damnation. His *Children* soon learn'd

learn'd to tread in their Father's Steps, and *Gluttony was equally propagated with Mankind*. And tho' that **Repairer** of Adam's almost shipwrack'd Progeny could be abstemious, when he might have furnish'd his Table with all the *Beasts of the Earth and Fowls of the Air at one Meal*, yet he could not refrain from the tempting *Fruit of the Vine*. His Ebriety was also catching, and the incestuous Off-spring of *Lot* ow'd their Original to the *Blood of the Grape*. Before the Flood, Men were busied in Banqueting and Riot, so they have been ever since, and so they will be to the End of the World. Men are great Followers of Antiquity in the Practice of these Vices.

For my part I envy not the *Board of Vitellius*, that, at one Meal, was cover'd with *two thousand Fish*, and double that Number of *Fowls*. Neither do I covet the more expensive Feasts of *Heliogabalus*. The refin'd Luxury of *Cleopatra* seems to me less sordid, tho' more prodigal, who at one Draught swallow'd down a King's Ransom. It was not her Palate she gratify'd in that rich Potion, but she humour'd the Gust of her Ambition; which is a *sublimer sort of Vice*, and may not unfitly be call'd the *Gluttony of the Soul*, while it revels on the Breath of Fame, and epicurizes with a *Chamelion-like Appetite* on the Air of Honour.

INTEMPERANCE is the *blind side of Mortals*; it is our soft Place, where we suffer our selves to

to be stroak'd and tickl'd to Death by the flattering Serpent. This made Isaac mis-place his Blessing for a Piece of Venison, and his Son to sell his Birth-right for a Mess of Pottage. The Italian Proverb hits the Glutton home, when it says, He digs his Grave with his Teeth, and cuts his Throat with the Knife that carves his Meat.

RIOTING and Drunkenness were formerly esteemed the national Sin of Germany only, but I believe other Nations may put in for a Share in the Charter. It is the Epidemick Vice of the whole World. Men fall passionately in Love with it, as if they were of Muæus the Poet's Opinion, who held, That perpetual Drunkenness was the only Reward of Merit and Virtue. The very Mahometans themselves, who are expressly forbidden by their Law to taste of Wine, being told by Mahomet that there is lodg'd a Devil in every Grape, are sworn Votaries to Bacchus, and the greatest Drunkards on Earth.

FOR my own part, I could be content with the Diet of *Jabannes de Temporibus*, who when he had lived three hundred Years, being ask-ed by the King of France, What Method he took to preserve his Life to so great an Age; reply'd, *Intus Melle, extra Oleo*. I say, I could be content with his Diet, not so much for the sake of spinning out my Life to Centuries of Years, (which yet I believe were not altogether impracticable in one of my Constitution)

50 *The Religion of a Bookseller.*

as that by a constant and habitual Desuetude of merely animal Enjoyments, I might the more closely and vigorously attend the Operations of my Soul, and be always awake to the superior Faculties of my Mind and Intellect, *Anima sicca, est Anima sapiens*, was a true Maxim of the Philosopher. And the Sons of Minerva experience it.

I abhor the superstitious Cant, and discriminating Shibboleth of *Enthusiasts*, who must needs take upon them to alter the Form of sound Words; as if the Dialect of the Primitive Church were grown obsolete, or that the Apostles understood not the *Orthography of Christian Faith*. I like not those spiritual *Boutefeu*s, who take a great deal of Pains to breed a Quarrel between *Religion* and *Nature*, and set those two Twins together by the Ears; as if we could not be good Christians, unless we deny our *Sense and Reason*. Certainly it is not the Business of Religion to supplant and extirpate Nature, but to prune and rectify it. *Religion* is that which polishes and smooths the Roughness of laps'd Humanity, pares away the vicious Knobs which grow up with us from our tainted *Embryo*, and by various Instruments of Grace forms and squares us into fit Materials for God's holy Temple. The *Work of Regeneration* seems in some manner to copy that of *Creation*. The Holy Ghost at his first Visit, finds us in our corrupt State, but a meer *Chaos*, a confused *Heap of Passions* and sen-

sensual Appetites; our Reason, that *Light of our Souls* lies dormant, smother'd as it were by our animal Faculties; Darkness covers the Face of this *Microcosm*, till he give the Word, *Fiat Lux*, and 'by a forcible Energy strike some divine Sparks out of our flinty Hearts. Thus separating the *Cælestial* Parts from the *Terrestrial*, and sublimating us into the Similitude of his own glorious Essence, enduing us with *Faith*, without destroying our *Reason*, and inspiring us with *Charity*, without exterminating our Passions. Thus I can believe the most transcendent *Mysteries* of our Religion, and yet not be guilty of an implicit Credulity and blind Devotion: And I can practise *Christian Moderation*, tho' I could never learn the Stoical Apathy.

I highly value the sacred Scripture as the *Oracle of Divinity, and Rule of Faith*: Yet I esteem them not a System of Philosophy, or a Pandect of *natural Science*. They are able to make us wise unto Salvation, and perfect in the Knowledge of God, through Faith in Christ Jesus, but they instruct us not in *Mundane Curiosities*, nor acquaint us with the Theory of all his Works. That frightful Cau-tion of the Apostle [*Beware of vain Philosophy*] is no Bug-bear to my Studies, nor can it startle my harmless Enquiries into the *Secrets* of the Elements. I will not be afraid of prying into the Circumstances of the *Earth*, since *Job* has told us, it is *hang'd upon Nothing*; nor of

casting my Eyes up to the Heavens, and examining the Motions, Influences and Operations of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, since the same holy Patriarch was posed with this astrological Question by God himself, Canst thou restrain the sweet Influence of the Pleiades, or loose the Bands of Orion? There are many natural Observations in the Bible which may serve as Hints or Spurs to more accurate Disquisitions: But in no Place that I know of, does it set a *Non ultra* to those sober Enquirers, who by making a modest and judicious Search into the *Works of the Creation*, are capable of returning a more exact and consummate Praise to the eternal Architect: Indeed, most (if not all) the *manual Trades* in the World, are but the several Species of practical Philosophy: While the Mechanick puts in Execution the *Theory* of the Student, and what the one dictates from the *School of Nature*, the other experiments in the *Shop of Art*. Neither would Men know how to keep themselves in Action, or maintain Commerce, were it not for the sake of *Philosophy*. To this are owing all the Advances and *Progressions* that ingenious Men have made in their Callings and Occupations. And every *Smith*, *Carpenter*, *Mason*, &c. that makes an Improvement in his Craft or Mystery deserves the Title of *Virtuoso*, and to be number'd among the Philosophers.

AMONG

AMONG all the Sciences, there is none to which (had I leisure) I could be more devoted than to *Astronomy*, and for this Reason I cou'd raise a Pyramid to the Inventors of the *Telescope*, that happy Midwife to new Discoveries in the Heavens; and think my self no less oblig'd to him that first found out the **Motion of the Earth**. Both have enfranchis'd me from the Slavery of Prepossession, and taught me to *unthink* the Sentiments of my greener Years. Methinks I owe no Allegiance to *Ptolomy*, and am perfectly wean'd from the magisterial Dictates of the *Stagyrite*. I cannot so readily believe that the **Sun** moves above two hundred and fifty thousand Miles every Minute of Time, as that the Earth moves eighteen Miles in that Space. And that the *Planet Saturn* moves ten, and the *fixed Stars* a hundred Times faster and farther than the Sun in the same Space, which must be the Consequence of the *Earth's standing still*, and the Sun's Motion. It seems no good Divinity to me, to expect that from God's infinite Power, which is repugnant to his equal Wisdom and the *Laws of Motion*, which he has established in the Universe. This were to make one of his Attributes *clash* with another, and to calumniate his Holiness, which consists in the Harmony of them all. I adore his *Omnipotency*, and tremble at the Thought of calling in Question the Power that made *All things of Nothing*. Yet I think it my

Du-

Duty to be wise as well as devout, and to speak rightly as well as reverently of his divine Perfections. As his Word is the *Rule of my Faith*, so his Providence is the *Pole-Star of my Reason*. And in the Scrutiny of his Works I do not so much enquire what he is able to do, as what he uses to do. Being assured that as nothing is to him impossible, so he has stated the Being, Actions, Passions, Qualities and Circumstances of all Things, ordering them in exact Number, Weight and Measure. So that, *à posse Dei ad esse rei non valet Consequen-tia*. He has fix'd the Laws of *Loco-motion* in corporeal Substances, and ty'd up the *Primum Mobile* it self to a certain Proportion of Time and Distance, which it can no more exceed, than the smallest *Wheel* of a Watch.

Such prodigious **Whirligiggs**, as the Heavenly Bodies must needs be, in the *Ptolomaick Hypothesis*, makes me giddy to think on't, and I believe they were troubled with a Vertigo, that first *reel'd* upon the Notion: Or they labour'd under the Deception of those at *Sea*, who sailing within Sight of the Shore, and not being able to perceive the Motion of the Vessel that carries them, are apt to fancy the neighbouring *Cliffs, Towns and Trees* were under *Sail*, and steering a contrary Course, since they so appear to do. For not less sullenly do I believe the *Earth moves constantly round on her Axis*, thus making the natural Day and Night, without putting the whole Frame

Frame of the Universe into an unconceivable Hurry.

THE Planet Jupiter is discover'd by the Telescope to make the same Circulation in 10 Hours, Mars in 23, and the Sun himself in 28 Days. These are no Chimæra's or Dreams of Poets, no metaphysical Speculations of Nut-shell Brains, but real Truths, demonstrable by Art and ocular Experience. And methinks it is a more *uniform Idea*, if we suppose the Earth to be a Planet like the rest, and to take its Turn in the septenary Dance round the Sun, who is plac'd in the Centre of this Vortex, and is the *true Apollo*, to whose Musick the whole *planetary System* keeps Time. I fear not the Lash of Maurolycus, nor the Scourge of his bigotted Brethren. If Coper-nicus was by them thought *Scuticâ & flagello dignus*, for innovating on the Doctrines of Ptolomy: What was Ptolomy himself worthy of, who entrench'd on a greater Antiquity, and undermin'd the Philosophy of Aristarchus Samius, who taught the Motion of the Earth above four hundred Years before Ptolomy was an Infant? For my part I think it no *Treason* against the Common-wealth of Learning to say, I prefer Galileo's *Tube* to Ptolomy's *Spectacles*, and the Discoveries of our English Royal Society, to the blind Conjectures of the Peripateticks, and the wild Speculations of Athens.

WHEN.

## 56 The Religion of a Bookseller.

WHEN I was first inform'd that there were discover'd four new Stars moving about Jupiter, and three about Saturn, I was as well pleased, as they who received the earliest News of Columbus's landing in America. I am so far from being of Alexander's Humour, that instead of weeping, I should heartily rejoice could I be credibly satisfied, That there are ten thousand more Worlds, than are already discover'd.

I am naturally melancholy, and the Weight of this leaden Complexion does so depress my Spirits, that all the Race of Mankind on Earth seems too small to afford Variety enough for a Relief. This makes me the more willing to believe what my Reason suggests to be true, That the Planets are Inhabited. It is a lively as well as a rational Notion; and since they are dark, opake Bodies, like the Earth we tread on, having no other Light but what they borrow from the Sun, and seem in all other Circumstances to be adapted for Habitations, I see no Solecism in Philosophy, nor Heresy against the Faith to believe they are really inhabited as is this Globe. That they have Succession of Day and Night, and their Satellites or Moons to give them Light by Night, even as we, is demonstrable to the Eye by the Help of the Telescope. But there would, in my Opinion, be little need of all this, were there no rational Inhabitants in those celestial Globes. It is a fastidious Pride in Man to fancy all this glittering Furniture above, was only

ly made for Ornament, or for Shepherds to gaze on in the Night, or for some other inferior Uses of the Sons of *Adam*. And 'tis a narrow Conceit to imagine, that tho' this Globe be plentifully inhabited by all sorts of Animals, *not a Turf of Land, nor a Puddle of Water being without its Tenants*, yet all those ample and glorious Bodies above should lye empty and vacant, tho' some of them be far bigger than our Earth, and for ought we know, may be ten times *more commodious* for Habitation. Those Passages in St. Paul's Epistles to the *Philippians* ii. 11. *Ephes.* i. 9, 10. *Colos.* i. 16. seem to be calculated for the *Inhabitants of those heavenly Bodies*. And his emphatical Words in *Ephes.* iii. 9. seem to be but a Transcript of the Revelations he receiv'd, and of the Things he saw when he was *rapt into the third Heaven*, viz. That there are some in those heavenly Places, even Principalities and Powers, to whom the manifold Wisdom of God in Christ was made known, and that they were not only created by Him, but for Him, and that they and we are *all of one Family or Descent*. These may be some of the ἀρχαὶ ἐξουσίαι which that holy Apostle speaks of in *2 Cor.* xii. 4. Words and Mysteries which could not be utter'd. And for ought I know, those Beings, which he calls *Principalities, Powers, Mights, Thrones and Dominions*, may be no other than the several glorious *Colonies of the coelestial Family dwelling in the*

## 58 The Religion of a Bookseller.

Stars, who all believe in the same Eternal Jesus, even as we do, and through his Mediation make their Approaches to God the Father. This may be *the farther Fellowship of the Mystery of God, bid from the Beginning.* This the untraceable Riches of Christ, which put St. Paul to an  $\ddot{\sigma}$   $\text{βαθύτερον}$  !  $\ddot{\sigma}$   $\text{πολὺ βαθύτερον τῆς}$   $\text{δυνάμεως αὐτοῦ.}$  O the Depth of his Wisdom ! O the superlative Greatness of his Power ! But whether the Planets be inhabited or no, this I am assured of, and can produce an hundred authentick Witnesses, that they are *dark Bodies*, like the Earth we tread on, and that they have no Light but what they receive from the Sun, which also they do but partially enjoy like us, by *successive Hemispheres*, having their Day and Night measur'd out to them proportionate to the Time they take up in moving round their Centres.

WHEN I have tyred my self with following these *visible Motions of Nature*, I retire Home again, thinking to take Sanctuary in my self, and find a Rest in the Contemplation of my own **Soul**: But there I do but commence a new Fatigue, and am hurry'd about in a *perpetual Circle* by an invisible Energy within me. I think, speak, and act with *infinite Variety*, yet know not how I perform these different Operations. I know my self to be an *incorporeal Substance*, and can easily feel out my own *Independency on the Body*. I look on this *House of Clay* I carry about with me, to

be only my Prison. But how I am confin'd to this Prison, I that am but a poor Scintillation or Spark of the eternal Sun, is a Kiddle which I cannot solve. I can better imagine how a Beam of our visible Sun may be united to a Marble Statue, than that a *pure Thought* should be fastned to a Clod of Earth, from which it cannot free it self but by Death, though it can pervade all the Universe beside. What Cement is it that thus closely ties together two such incompatible Essences, as *Heaven and Earth*, *Light* and *Darkness*, *Spirit* and *Body*? This is a Knot must be left for *Elias* to untie, and is indeed one chief Argument of the *Shipwreck* of human Reason, since not only all other things are obscure to us, but we are so to our selves, the nearest Objects, even our own *domestick Operations* are as incomprehensible to us, as those that are farthest off. The Things that touch us, nay the very Faculties by which we touch, see, understand, &c. are as distant from us as the ninth Sphere, and we are as much Strangers to our selves, as to the Inhabitants of *Terra incognita*. There wou'd be nothing more welcome to me than a *History of my Original*, for I do not compute my Age or Family, by the short Chronology of the *Parish-Register*; nor do I think my self much the older by my Mother's additional Record of *nine Months*, I liv'd in her Womb. I esteem her Reckoning from my *Conception*, but the tragick Memories of

## 60 The Religion of a Bookseller.

my Death, and those which by most are accounted the *Chambers of Life*, and Shops of Generation, are no better in my Judgment than the Receptacles of the Dead, Seminaries of Corruption, the Graves of Souls *defunct to the higher World*. For I believe I was then born when the Morning Stars *sang together*, and when all the Sons of God shouted for Joy. I time my *Infancy* with that of the Universe, and esteem no Man older or younger than my self, no not the *Angels* themselves, believing that all *spiritual Substances* were created together, in the Beginning. I will not with some accuse *Moses* of Scantiness in his *History of the Creation*, because according to the Letter he seems to take but little notice of *immaterial Beings*. The Hebrew *Cabbala*, with the Commentaries of their learned Rabbins, and some of the *primitive Fathers* of the Christian Church do sufficiently evince, That there are greater Mysteries contained in the three first Chapters of *Genesis*, than the bare Letter, or vulgar Translations seem to exhibit. There is a *Sacrament* in that holy Language, which whoever partakes of, can be no Stranger to the natural and divine Truths couch'd under it. To such an one the History of the *terrestrial Adam's* happy State in Paradise, and his Banishment from thence, will be an Hieroglyphick of the original Beatitude of the *immaterial World*, and the Degeneracy of human Souls, their Descent from the æthereal Man-

Mansions, and Confinement to Houses of Clay, as well as of the Fall of Angels. I seem to my self, not without Reason, to embrace the Doctrine of the **Pre-existence of Souls**, since it was among the *Credenda* of many antient Sages, a peculiar Tradition of the Jews, and the general Opinion of all the East. That Question which was put to our Saviour concerning the *Man that was born blind*, whether it was for his own Sins, or those of his Parents, seems clearly to imply, That he was in a Condition or Capacity of *sinning before his Birth*, which how it could be without supposing the **Pre-existence** of his Soul, is past my Divinity or Philosophy to unriddle. The various Conjectures also which the Jews made of Christ according to the Report of his Disciples, when some said he was Elias, others that he was one of the Prophets, a third sort, that he was John the Baptist risen from the Dead, are evident Arguments, That the Doctrine of Pre-existence, and a *Metempsychosis* was established as Part of the Creed of that Nation. Of which also that Passage in the Wisdom of *Solomon* is no obscure Hint, where the Author says, *Or rather being a good Spirit, I came into a Body pure and undefiled.* Neither am I startled because I find not Christ, or any of his Apostles asserting, or so much as mentioning any such Doctrine. St. John's Hyperbole, in the last Verse of his Gospel, satisfies me, that I must not expect to find all that our Saviour did and said,

said, register'd by the Evangelists: And St. Paul's frequent Exhortation to hold fast the Traditions that he had imparted to them, whether by *Word* or *Epistle*, convince me, That it is not unreasonable to conclude, That he deliver'd many Doctrines in his Sermons, which he had no Occasion to mention in his *Letters to the Churches*: Among which this might be one. However, it is a sufficient Warrant to my Belief, that I no where in all the Scripture can find this Doctrine reprehended. Which, had it been an Error, could not have escaped the Censure of Christ and his Apostles, it being the universal Tenet of all Sorts of Jews, except the Sadducees. When I consider also that *Origen* and *Ammonius* taught it in the Schools of *Alexandria* (*Plotinus* himself learning it from the latter) and that all the primitive Fathers, who were Platonists, asserted it not only as a philosophical, but also as a divine Truth; I look upon it as an Effect of Gothic Barbarity and Ignorance, which afterwards overspread all Christendom, That neither this, nor hardly any other Point of *Platonism* was countenanced in the Christian Schools, but only the Dictates of *Aristotle* and his Ghost *Averroes*. In fine, that elegant Flou-  
rish of St. *Augustine*, *Infundendo creatur, cre-  
ando infunditur*, is no Rule of my Faith in this Point, since it fastens so many irreverend Con-  
sequences on God Almighty; neither can I believe the Soul to be *ex Traduce*, because it carries

carries in its Front so many Inconsistencies in Philosophy, besides the Indignity that is done to the Soul thereby, which amounts to a true *Scandalum Magnum*, since 'tis levell'd at the whole Order of immaterial Beings. I must therefore believe, that I had a Being *long* before I came into this Body, and yet not resolve the Manner of my Existence into a meer Potentiality, or an unactive Slumber in the *Bosom* of my Causes, as if I were then but a *seminal Idea* in the Blood of my Fathers, or a metaphysical *Dream* of my present self. I believe I was in a State of greater Activity before I was conceiv'd by my Mother, than since she bore me; and for ought I know, have rang'd all the boundless Tracts of the Universe, been naturaliz'd in the several Regions of the Sky and Air, till being tyred with so vast a Ramble, and willing to try all States of Life, I was by the Force of a strong Inclination, and the irresistible Charm of rightly adapted Matter, allured into this terrestrial Body, here to do *Penance* for the Faults of my superiour Life, and in this Horizon between the upper and the lower World to make my Choice of Good or Evil, Light or Darkness, Life or Death. This unlocks all the *Ænigma's of Providence*; and reconciles the harsher Difficulties with which the immediate Creation or Traduction of Souls is involved. It is the noblest Instrument of Virtue, the sharpest Spur to a divine Life, whilst it doubles the Hopes we have

## 64 The Religion of a Bookseller.

have of being immortal *à parte post*, by assuring us we were so *à parte ante*. And that it is not from any arbitrary Decree of God, inconsistent with the rest of his divine Perfections, that we shall live for ever, but from our own Nature and Essence, being created to subsist an *indeterminable Duration of Ages*.

I believe those Books of the holy *Scripture* which are lost, could they possibly be recovered again, would serve as a Lamp to enlighten us in many *Obscurities* of Religion, History, and Nature: And if the Writings of *Jasher*, *Iddo* the Prophet, &c. could inform us nothing of the *Pre-existence* of Souls, 'tis very probable the more early Oracles of *Enoch* would, since he was but the **seventh Soul that was drench'd in terrestrial Matter**, and led so pure and incorrupt a Life, as wou'd tempt one to believe, that he was *awaken'd* to the Memory of his former State, which, for ought we know, might have no small Influence on his succeeding Change.

I have often wonder'd where St. *Jude* had so particular an Account of *Michael* the Arch-Angel's Dispute with the Devil about the *Body of Moses*, that he was able to relate the very Words that pass'd between them. Surely the Jews had some Books, or at least Traditions, which were believed to be Orthodox, tho' they were not so much as mention'd in the sacred Canon; for we cannot without great Impiety imagine that the *holy Saint* *wou'd*

wou'd impose upon our Belief any thing that was foreign or apocryphal. I am apt to conclude from hence, That there were many traditional Doctrines entertained among the Hebrews, which are by us esteemed no better than Fables.

HOWEVER, tho' I am thus convinced of the Truth of our Pre-existence, and that this present Life is but a Shadow or Dream in Comparison of what we enjoy'd before our Immersion in the Flesh; yet I would not have this Dream interrupted by any untimely or harsher Stroke of Destiny. *I shou'd think it no Inconvenience to live long!* but rather a Blessing, that so a Multitude of Years might scum off the Froth and Sullage of our Appetites and Passions, that so being gradually wean'd from those low Affections which brought us down to the Earth, we may without any Disquiet or Turbulency remount to our *Aetherial Homes*. For I am apt to think that those Souls who go out of their Bodies, with any remaining Relish upon them of the Body, like Fruit that is either pluck'd off, or shaken down by violent Winds, still retain in their Separation, a raw and eager Smack of the Flesh, with a languishing Byass toward it. Whereas he that has carried his full Period in the Body, parts from it with Ease and Willingness, as ripe Fruit drops from the Tree. And therefore I do not wonder that the most general Scene of Apparitions, Ghosts,

## 66 *The Religion of a Bookseller.*

&c. is the Church-yard, or at least that Place where the Body of the *Spectrum* was buried. And the removed Earth, which covered the *Cobler of Silesia's Body*, is a shrewd Intimation, That there are some departed Souls, which if they seek not a Reunion with their Bodies, yet endeavour to hold a *kind of Correspondence* with them even in the Grave. And tho' the Impossibility of being married again to these their dear *Consorts*, after that final Divorce, were enough, one would think, to cure their impotent Desires, yet they burn with a new Lust, and commit a *spiritual Adultery* in the unlawful Bed of the Grave. These I look on as the Effects of a *too early* and violent Separation, and therefore esteem *Methuselab* and the rest of the Fathers before the Flood, happy; who prolong'd their Years to the *utmost* Standard of human Life, and seem'd not so much to die, (for that imports Violence) as voluntarily to forsake their *old rotten* Habitations, shake Hands with their Bodies, and so return to the Æthereal Palaces, from whence they had so long straggled.

YET notwithstanding the great Esteem I have of *long Life*, as a Means rather to improve than impair us; I cannot promise my self to outlive a *Jubilee*, tho' I have already seen one Revolution of *Saturn*. Neither do I affect to make *Popes*, *Emperors*, *Kings*, and *Grand-Seigniors*, the Land-marks in the Chronology of my self; that were to insult over

the

the Royal Ashes of Princes, besides the Ambition in ranking my self in their Number. Me thinks I grow old even at those Years when the World counts me young, and possess the Heritage of *David's* last ten Years of Fourscore, in the *Prime* of my Age.

INDEED the whole Earth, and all this *planetary* *World* seems to drop and decay. Every *Species* of Being grow weak and languid, and seem to draw near their Dissolution. Yet 'tis needless to engage God in the Act, since tho' *Creation* was above the Force of Nature, yet *Mutation* is not, and no *Annihilation* can proceed from that paternal Essence of Essences. It seems easy to me to believe, that the World will perish upon the *Ruins* of its own *Principles*. And tho' the precise Period of its Destruction be not known to the Angels themselves, yet there are not wanting some *Philosophical Rules*, whereby one might venture to calculate its Duration, and by observing the various Attempts, Eruptions and Devastations made by *fire* already, one may conjecture about what Time that most *active* Element shall be let loose, to destroy this Face of the World, and transform this *superannuated* Heaven and Earth into *new ones*, as the holy Prophet has foretold. For as to Annihilation, I look on it as a Chimera, or Non-Entity, which cannot be said to flow from Him who is *All-being*, and the Fountain of Existence. It were easier to conceive that Cold

should be the immediate Effect of Fire, and Darkness the natural Result of the actual Presence of Light, than to think that *Annihilation or not Being* can proceed from Him who is the original Source of Being, from whose divine Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, all Things flow by a necessary Emanation, and continue in their several Perfections by as unalterable a Law as that which gave them; so that there can be no Vacuity supposed in their eternal Subsistence, no Leaps or Starts from something to nothing. It is far more agreeable to the Principles of Philosophy to conceive, that only the gross and corruptible Part of the Universe shall be subject to the *Action of Fire*, such as the Earth we tread on with the other planetary Bodies; but that the ~~pu-~~ rest Æther shall remain for ever untouched, unchang'd, the Sanctuary of the Bleſſ'd, the Habitation of the Spirits of just Men made perfect. I am also confirmed in this Belief by something more sacred and authentick than *natural Philosophy*. For when the royal Psalmist in that divine Rhapsody calls upon the *Heaven of Heavens, and the Waters which are above the Heavens*, to praise God, he gives this for a Reason, (viz.) Because he spake and they were made, he commanded and they were created. He established them to Eternity, and for everlasting Ages: He fix'd a Decree, which he will not disannul. Then he calls upon the Earth and all Creatures there-

therein to join in the same *Act of Praise*, but not for the same Reason; not because the *Earth shall endure for ever*, but because the Name of God alone is exalted, and his Honour above Heaven and Earth. Which Distinction seems to me an evident Argument of the *unalterable Stability of the Cœlestial and Aëthereal World*, whatsoever Mutations and Changes the Terrestrial may be subject to.

THAT those immense Tracts of quiet and impassible *Aether* shall be the *Seat of the Blessed*, is very consistent with Philosophy, and no ways repugnant to Divinity. However, let the Place be where it pleases God, we are assured that the Entertainment and Joys do far surpass all human Comprehension. Yet, tho' we cannot have adequate Conceptions of supream Felicity, there are some Land-marks by which we may take imperfect Measures of that *Region of Promise*. The dim Light of natural Reason may afford us a Glimpse, or faint Prospect of those superlative Joys, and the *Opticks of Faith* will improve the View. We shall have the same Nature and Faculties there as here, but free from the least Alloy of Frailty and Imperfection. Our Souls shall display the radiant Brightness of their immortal Essence with stronger *Vibrations* than the Sun, having no *internal Scum* of Concupiscence boiling out from the Centre of a depraved Will or erroneous Understanding, to blemish and stain those unspotted Orbs of Light; nor

a ter-

70 *The Religion of a Bookseller.*

a terrene gross Body to eclipse and shut up their Splendors. But being ever bright and serene, they shall shine through their glorified and spiritual Bodies, as the Sun does through the *pervious* Air, or at least as he does on a bright Cloud, which drinks in his Beams to reflect them abroad with a more *sensible* Glory: We shall then see, not by receiving the visible Species into the *narrow Glass* of an organized Eye, we shall then hear without the distinct and curious *Contexture* of the Ear. The Body shall then be *all Eye, all Ear.* All *Sense* in the whole, and every Sense in every Part. In a word, it shall be all over a common *Sensorium*, and being made of the purest Æther, without the Mixture of any lower or grosser Element, the Soul shall by one *undivided Act*, at once perceiv eall that Variety of Objects, which now cannot, without several distinct Organs, and successive Actions or Passions, reach our Sense. From this *superlative Tenuity* and *Claritude* of our Bodies, will arise that *ineffable Delicacy* in the Sensation of the Soul, which will transport it with Delights infinitely transcending the *Heighth* of Mortal Voluptuousness, nay, and even those more exalted Pleasures which the Virtuous sometimes enjoy here on Earth, as *Foretastes* of their future Beatitude in Heaven. What here excites but an ordinary Emotion of Joy in the Soul, will there produce all *Raptures and Extasies.* We shall be always in *Paroxisms of Love,*

Love, such are the transcendent Beauties of that admirable Place ! and such the divinely amorous Bent of the Soul. We shall be *always languishing*, yet ever enjoying what we languish for : Neither suffering the least Pain through the Want of Fruition, nor through any Satiety that shall attend it : But through the *Vigour of an immortal Activity*, we shall have ever freshly kindled Desires and new Enjoyments, being dissolv'd in a *Circle of Beatitude* without Measure or End.

HERE on Earth Men generally strive to *monopolize* Pleasure to themselves, there being few of so generous a Temper as to be sensibly touch'd with Delight, that another shou'd partake with them in that which they esteem Felicity : This is the *peculiar Advantage* of the Bless'd in Heaven, that even in the Height of the Affairs of immortal Love and Empire, where they possess *eternal Crowns* and unfading Beauties, there is no such Thing to be found as a Rival or Competitor, but every *one's Joy* is enhanc'd by the Enjoyments of another. *Every one loves all, and all love every one.* Neither wou'd their Felicity be perfect, cou'd any Member of that happy Society be suppos'd not to have his full Proportion and Share of Beatitude. So communicative is the Love and Joy of those holy Souls, that they must cease to love and enjoy themselves, shou'd they desist from loving and rejoicing in the Happiness of their *Fellow-Citizens.* And if

if we may take our Measures of their Joys from our common Experiences here on Earth, it will be no small Augmentation of their Complacency, to find those very Friendships which they had contracted here below, translated to the Mansions above, when they shall both see and know those whom they once loved on Earth, now to be made Denizens with them in Heaven, *with what Ardours will they caress one another!* With what Transports of divine Affection will they mutually embrace, and vent those innocent Flames, which had so long lain smothering in the Grave! How passionately rhetorical and elegant will their Expressions be, when their Sentiments which Death had frozen up, when he congeal'd their Blood, shall now be *thaw'd again in the warm Airs of Paradise!* Like Men that have escap'd a common Shipwreck, and swim safe to the Shore, they will congratulate each other's Happiness with Joy and Wonder. *Their first Addresses will be a Dialect of Interjections and short Periods, the most pathetick Language of Surprize and high-wrought Joy!* And all their after Converse, even to Eternity, will be couched in the highest Strains and Flowers of heavenly Oratory, with Allelujahs intermix'd.

It much sweetens the Thoughts of Heaven to me, to remember that there are a Multitude of my Friends gone thither; to think such a Friend that died at such a Time, and such a one at another Time (*O! what a Number of them*

them cou'd I name) and that all these I shall meet again. 'Tis true, 'tis a Question with some, whether we shall know each other in Heaven or no? But 'tis none with me; for surely there shall no Knowledge cease which now we have, but only that which implieth our Imperfection, and what Imperfection can this imply? Indeed we shall not know each other *after the Flesh*, nor by Stature, Voice, Colour, or outward Shape, nor by Terms of Affinity and Consanguinity, nor by Youth or Age, nor *I think* by Sex, but by the Image of Christ and spiritual Relation, beyond doubt we shall know and be known; nor is it only my old Friends (such as *Essex, Russel, Sydney, &c.*) that I shall know in Heaven, but all the Saints of all Ages, whose Faces in the Flesh I never saw. *Luther*, in his last Sicknes, being asked his Judgment whether we shall know one another in Heaven, answer'd thus, *Quid accidit Adamo? nunquam ille viderat Ewam, &c. i. e.* How was it with *Adam*? He had never seen *Eve*; yet he asketh not who she was, or whence she came, but saith, *She is Flesh of my Flesh, and Bone of my Bone.* And how knew he that? Why, being indued with the true Knowledge of God, he so pronounced; after the same sort shall we be renewed by Christ in another Life. And we shall know our Parents, Wives, Children, &c. much more perfectly than *Adam* did then know *Eve*. In Heaven we shall not only see

## 74 The Religion of a Bookseller.

our *Elder Brother Christ*, but all our Kindred and Friends that living here in his Fear died in his Favour; for since our Saviour tells us that the Children of the Resurrection  
Luke xx. 36. Luke 16. shall be *ἴσαγγελοι* equal to, or like the Angels who yet in the *Visions* of *Daniel* and *St. John* appear to be acquainted with each other, since in the Parable of the *miserable Epicure* and the happy Beggar, the Father of the Faithful is represented, as knowing not only the Person and present Condition, but the past Story of *Lazarus*: Since the Instructer of the Gentiles confidently expects his converted and pious *Thessalonians* to be his *Crown at that great Day*: Since these Arguments, besides divers others are afforded us by the Scripture, we may safely conclude that we shall know each other in a Place where, since nothing requisite to Happiness can be wanting, we may well suppose that we shall not want so great a Satisfaction as that of being *knowingly happy in our other selves, our Friends*.

THUS far we may venture to speak of the lower Degrees of Cœlestial Beatitude, the **mutual Love and Entertainment of the Blessed.** But who has ever mounted to the highest Scale of heavenly Bliss? Let him come down and tell us the *Mysteries* wrapt up in Clouds, the *Secrets* hid within the Veil of inaccessible Light? Let him describe the Wonders of the beatifick Vision, and say how deep  
170 the

the Rivers of Pleasure are which run by God's Right Hand for evermore! For my part, I must confess, I'm lost in that Abyss of Wonders, and therefore modestly withdraw my Pen to Subjects more *domestick* and within our Reach, and yet even here I shall but pass from *one Abyss to another*, since every Thing has a Depth in it not to be fathom'd by our weightiest Sense or most solid Reason

I have often try'd to dive into the **Profundities of Death**, but still I find my Intellect too light a Plummet, and the whole *Thread of Life*, though spun out in finest Speculations, would still prove far too short to reach that endless Bottom.

'Tis true there have been Men that have try'd even *in Death it self* to relish and taste it, and who have bent their utmost Faculties of Mind to discover what *this Passage is*; but they are none of them come back to tell us the *News*.

— *No one was ever known to wake,  
Who once in Death's cold Arms a Nap did take.*

*Lucret. Lib. 3.*

Canius Julius being condemn'd by that Beast Caligula, as he was going to receive the Stroke of the Executioner, was ask'd by a Philosopher, Well Canius, said he, whereabout is your Soul now? What is she doing? What are you thinking of? I was thinking, reply'd

Canus, to keep my self ready, and the Faculties of my Mind settled and fix'd, to try if in this short and quick Instant of Death I could perceive the Motion of the Soul when she parts from the Body, and whether she has any Resentment at the Separation, that I may after come again to acquaint my Friends with it.

So that I fancy there is a certain Way by which some Men make Trial what Death is, but for my own part I cou'd. ne'er yet find it out.

I have sometimes thought, what would I give for the least Glimpse of that invisible World which the first Step I take out of this Body will present me with, and that there was nothing in the whole Discourse of Death that I durst not meet the boldest way, and have therefore often attempted to **look him full in the face**, that I might learn to die generously; but still when it came to the Pinch, Conscience that makes Cowards of us all, made one of me, and I was forc'd to shrink back with Shame.

YET surely the Terroure is not so much in **Death it self**, as in the tragick Pomp that goes before and after it. The tedious Discipline of Sickness, the formal Visits of Relations and Friends, their melancholy Chat, the frightful Harangue of the Physician, and our own dismal Apprehensions compose that horrid Scene which renders Death uncomfortable,

table. When the poor Patient that perhaps may yet *outlive his Fears of Death*, and see Millions drop into the Grave before him, yet dies a thousand Deaths in his hag-ridden Fancy, and makes his Bed his Grave by Strength of an abus'd Imagination.

'Tis only Fancy gives Death those hideous Shapes we think him in, for indeed Death is no more than a soft and easy Nothing, or rather *Nature's Play-day*. I firmly think it is no more to die than to be born, we felt no Pain coming into the World, nor shall we in the act of leaving it; though in the first one would believe there were more of Trouble than in the latter, for we *cry coming into the World*, but quietly and calmly leave it. What is Death but *a ceasing to be what we were, before we were, we are kindled and put out; to cease to be, and not to begin to be, is the same thing*. Methinks it is but th' other Day I came into the World, and anon I am leaving it; for tho' I am but in my thirtieth Year, and at present in perfect Health and Strength, yet I look upon my self as a Man that *has* one Foot in the Grave already; for David says *seventy is the Age of Man*, and I have lived near thirty Years of that Time already. The longest of my Designs now is not above a Year's Extent, I think of nothing now but ending, take my last Leave of every Place I depart from; Alas! there is no fooling with Life when it is once turn'd beyond thirty. Silence was a full Answer of him

78 *The Religion of a Bookseller.*

him that being ask'd what he thought of human Life, said nothing, turn'd him round and vanish'd. *Oh how Time runs away!* and we are dead e're we have Time to think our selves alive, one doth but breakfast here, another dine, he that liveth longest, doth but sup, we must all go to Bed in another World, *therefore good night to you here, and good morrow hereafter.*

INDEED our whole Life is but one often repeated Step to Death, and we are as near it at the first Minute of our setting out as at a hundred Years End. For Death either keeps an even collateral Pace with us from our very Birth, or at least he marches but *one Step behind us* all the way of our Life; so that when the appointed Time is come for him to execute his Commission, he soon can reach forth his Hand, arrest us, and stop our further Journey. *Man in the Vigour and Prime of his Years*, fancies himself in the midst of a vast Plain; he looks behind him, and numbers all the weary Steps of Life he has already taken, persuades himself that Death must also measure the same Space of Years in his Pursuit, before he can o'ertake him; then turning his Eyes before, he sees a *boundless Tract*, an indeterminate set of Years; being thus deluded by the enchanted Prospect, he rushes on, and bids Defiance to pale languid Death, imagining he sees him lagging afar off, at the first Entrance of all the *wide-stretch'd Waste*, where-

wheaeas the nimble *Skeleton* is as far advanced as he, only keeps out of Sight, and will never be seen till the very Moment he gives the fatal Stroke. To whatsoever *Light* Man turns his Face, Death, like his *Shadow*, whips behind him still, and is at his Back, but ne'er will *face him*, till the latest *Gasp*. And he that can stoutly bear his Looks for that one Moment, shall never see him more to all Eternity. 'Tis but the Fear of this one Moment's Pain, that makes our Lives so uneasy all along. And I am really ashame'd of this incorrigible Folly of Mortals, who spend so many Years in painful Disquisitions how to protract the Pain of *one poor Moment*, and undergo ten times more Labour to escape it, than they can possibly feel in undergoing it. I admire the Resolution of the *Indian Wives*, who in Contempt of Death, scorn to survive their Husband's *Funeral Pile*, but with chaste Zeal, and an undaunted Courage, throw themselves into the Flames, as if they were then going to the Nuptial Bed. Certainly they calculate aright, who reckon the Day of our Death, the Day of our Nativity, since we are then born to the Possession of immortal Life. For this Reason I honour the Memory of *Ludovicus Cartesius* the *Paduan Lawyer*, who, in his last Will and Testament, ordered, that no sad Funeral Rites should be observ'd for him, but that his Corps should be attended with *Musick and Joy*

Joy to the Grave, and as if it were the Day of his Espousals, he commanded that twelve Suits of gay Apparel should be provided instead of Mourning for an equal Number of Virgins, who should usher his Body to the Church.

It will not, I hope, be an unpardonable Transition, if I start back from the melancholy Horrors of Death, to the innocent Comforts of *human Life*, and from the immortal Nuptials of this *Italian*, pass to the mortal Emblem, the Rites of Matrimony, the Happiness of *Female Society*, and our Obligations to Women. 'Tis an uncourtly Virtue, which admits of no Proselytes but Men devoted to Cœlibacy, and he is a Reproach to his Parents, who shuns the Entertainments of Hymen, the blissful Amours of the fair Sex, without which he himself had not gain'd so much as the Post of a *Cypher*, in the Numeration of Mankind, though he now makes a Figure too much in Nature's Arithmetick, since he wou'd put a Stop to the Rule of *Multiplication*. He is worse than *Numa Pompilius*, who appointed but a set Number of Virgins, and those were free to marry, after they had guarded the sacred Fires, the Term of four Years: Whereas, if his morose Example were follow'd, all Women should turn *Vestals* against their Wills, and be consecrated to a *peevish Virginity* during their Lives. I wonder at the unnatural Fancy of such as could

could wish we might procreate like Trees, as if they were *asham'd of the Act*, without which they had never been capable of such an extravagant Thought, or like *Alphonſus King of Spain*, would correct the Institutions of Heaven, and say, Had they been present with God, when he commanded *Adam and Eve* to encrease and multiply, they would have propos'd a better Method for Generation. Certainly he that created us, and has riveted the *Love of Women* in the very Centre of our Natures, never gave us those passionate Desires to be our incurable Torment, but only as Spurs to our Wit and Virtue, that by the Dexterity of the one, and the Integrity of the other, we might merit and gain the darling Object which should consummate our earthly Happiness.

I do not patronize the *Smoke* of those *Dung-hill Passions*, who only court the Possessions of an Heiress, and fall in Love with her Money. *This is to make a Market of Women*, and prostitute the nobleſt Affection of our Souls to the ſordid Ends of Avarice. Neither do I commend the softer Aims of thoſe, who are wedded only to the charming *Lineaments* of a beautiful Face, a clear Skin, or a well ſhap'd Body. 'Tis only the Virtue, Discretion, and good Humour of a Woman could ever captivate me, and I am bless'd in a Mate who has her Share both of theſe and the other exteriour Ornaments.

Slow T

M

I hate

82 *The Religion of a Bookseller.*

I hate the Cynical Flout of those who can afford Women no better Title than *necessary Evils*, and the lewd poetical License of him who made this Anagram, *Uxor & Orcus—idem*. That Orator whisper'd the *Doctrine of Devils*, who said, Were it not for the Company of Women, Angels would come down and dwell among us. I rather think, were it not for such ill-natur'd Fellows as he, Women themselves would prove Angels.

'Tis an ungrateful Return, thus to abuse that gentle Sex, who are the Moulds in which all the Race of Adam are cast: As if they deserv'd no better Treatment at our Hands, than we usually give to Saffron Bags and Verde Bottles, which are thrown into a Corner, when the Wine and Spice are taken out of them. The Pagan Poet was little better than a Murderer, who allow'd but two good Hours to a Woman.

Τὴν μίαν εἰς θαλάσσην, τὴν μίαν εἰς θαύματα.

*Unam in Thalamo, alteram in Tumulo.*

For my part, I should esteem the World but a Desert, were it not for the Society of the *fair Sex*; and the most polished Part of Mankind would appear but like Hermits in Masquerade, or a kind of *civilized Satyrs*, so imperfect and unaccomplish'd is our Virility, without the Reunion of our lost Rib, that substantial and integral Part of our selves.

Those

Those who are thus disjointed from Women, seem to inherit *Adam's Dreams*, out of which nothing can awake them, but the Em-braces of their own living Image, the fair Traduct of the first Metamorphosis in the World, *the Bone converted into Flesh*. They are always in Slumbers and Trances, ever se-parated from themselves, in *a wild Pursuit* of an intolerable Loss, nor can any thing fix their volatile Desire, but the powerful Magnetism of some charming *Daughters of Eve*. These are the Centres of all our Desires and Wishes, the true *Pandoras* that alone can satisfy our longing Appetites, and fill us with *Gifts and Blessings*, *in them we live before we breathe*, and when we have tasted the vital *Air*, 'tis but to die an amorous Death, that we may live more pleasantly in them again. They are the *Guardians of our Infancy*, the *Life and Soul of our Youth*, the *Companions of our riper Years*, and the *Cherishers of our old Age*. From the Cradle to the Tomb, we are wrapt in a Circle of Obligations to them for their Love and good Offices. And he is a Monster in Nature who returns them not the Caresses of an *innocent Affection*, the spotless Sallies of Virtue and Gratitude. *Love is the Soul of the World*, the vital Prop of the Elements, 'tis the Cement of human Society, the strongest Fence of Nature. Earth would be a Hell without it, neither can there be any Heaven where this is absent.

84 *The Religion of a Bookseller.*

YET I am no Advocate for those general Lovers, who not content to let this active Passion run within the lawful Channel of chaste Marriage, swell it up with irregular Tides, and wanton Flouds of Lust, till it wash away the Banks of Reason and Morality, find out new Passages and Rivulets, encroaching on other Mens Possessions, or at least dilating on the general Waste of the weaker Sex, who ought to be as Gardens enclos'd, or holy Ground not to be prophan'd by the Access of every bold Intruder.

I approve not the incestuous Mixtures of the Chinese, where the Brother marries the Sister, or next-a-kin; nor the sensual Latitude of the Mahometans, who allow every Man four Wives, and as many Concubines as he can maintain. But above all I detest the wild and brutal Liberty of that Philosopher, who, in his Idea of human Happiness, conceived a promiscuous Copulation *ad Libitum*, to be a necessary Ingredient of our Bliss.

ON the other side, my Regards to that Sex are not circumscrib'd within such narrow Limits, as to exclude any from our Conversation and Friendship, that by any warrantable Title can lay a just Claim to it; I would have our Commerce with Females as general as is their Number that deserve it, whose Knowledge and Virtue will be a sufficient Security from criminal Familiarities, and from  
the

the Scandals of the World. There are among that Sex as among Men, good and bad, virtuous and vicious; and a prudent Man will so level his Choice, as not to stain his Reputation, or hazard his Integrity. 'Tis no small Point of Discretion, I own, to regulate our *Friendships with Women*, and to walk evenly on the Borders and very *Ridge of a Passion*, whose next Step is a Precipice of Flames not kindled from the Altar of Virtue. However, 'tis not impossible to *conserve Innocency, on the Frontiers of Vice*. *There is no Difference of Sex among Souls*, and a masculine Spirit may inhabit a Woman's Body. It is disingenuous to rob Virtue of the Advantages it receives from Beauty, which makes it appear like Diamonds enchas'd in Gold, and gives it a greater Lustre. *Reason it self will appear more eloquent in the Mouth of a fair Maid, than in that of the most florid Orator:* And there are no Figures in all the System of Rhetorick so moving and forcible as the peculiar *Graces of that Sex*. I am of Opinion that Men can boast of no Endowments of the Mind, which Women possess not in as great, if not a greater, Eminency. There have been *Muses as well as Amazons*, and no Age or Nation but has produced some Females renowned for their Wisdom or Virtue. Which makes me conclude, that the Conversation of Women is no less useful than pleasant, and that the Dangers which

which attend their Friendships and Commerce, are recompensed by vast Advantages.

But whatever may be adduced against the Friendships we contract with Women, there is not in all the Magazine of Detraction any Weapon of Proof against the mutual Intimacies of otir own Sex, the generous Endearments of Souls truly masculine and virtuous, united by Sympathies and Magnets whose Root is in Heaven. No Panegyricks can reach the Worth of these divine Engagements, since they admit not of any Mediocrity, but derive their Value only from their Excess. I have been always slow and cautious in contracting Amities, lest I should run the Risque of his Mistake, who, while he thought he had an Angel by the Hand, held the Devil by the Foot: But where I have once pitch'd my Affection, I love without Reserve or Rule. I never entertain, without Suspicion, the warm Professions of Love, which some Men are apt to make at first Sight. Such *Mushroom Friendships* have no deep Root, and therefore most commonly wither as soon as they are form'd. Yet I deny not, but that there are some secret Marks and Signatures which Souls ordain'd for Love and Friendship can read in each other at a Glance, by which that noble Passion is excited, that afterwards displays it self in more apparent Characters. This is the silent Language of Platonick Love, wherein the Eye supplies the Office of the Tongue; 'tis the Rhetorick of amorous

morous Spirits wherein they make their Court without a Word. There are some lasting Friendships which owe their Birth to such an Interview, but their Growth and Fastness proceed from other Circumstances, being cherished by frequent Conversation, repeated good Offices, and an inviolate Fidelity, which are the only proper and substantial Aliment of Love. 'Tis impossible to fix a durable Friendship, wherever we place a *transient Inclination*, because of the insuperable Necessities which divide particular Men from each other's Commerce or Knowledge, after they have begun to love. In the Orb of this Life Men are like the Planets, which now and then cast friendly Aspects on each other *en passant*: But following the Motions of the greater Sphere of Providence, they are again separated, their Influences dissolv'd, and new Amours commenc'd. But I would have my Friendship resemble the *fixed Stars* and Constellations, who in the eternal Revolution never part Company or Interests.

I have ever look'd on those Men to be but one Step differenc'd from Beasts, whose Love is confin'd only to their own Familjes or Kindred. Such a narrow Affection deserves not to be rank'd in the *Predicament of Humanity*. My Love is communicative, it makes a large Progress, and extends it self to Strangers; it takes in Men of different Humours and Complexions, Customs and Languages, it refuses none

none that have the *Face of Men*, but with wide open'd Arms embraces all that bear the Stamp of human Nature. And I have this *peculiar in my Temper*, that I find not the least Reluctancy in loving and doing Good to my *Enemies*. That which costs others so much Labour and Toil to persuade themselves to, is to me as familiar and easy, as to laugh at a ridiculous Object, and I esteem it not so properly a Virtue in my self, as a Gift of Nature, the Effect of my Constitution.

YET I cannot pretend to such an *universaliz'd Spirit*, as to be without my *Antipathies*. I esteem Hatred to be as necessary and allowable a Passion as Love, provided it be exercis'd on its proper Objects, since as the one fastens us to those things which procure our Happiness, so the other snatches us from what would be the Cause of our Misery. I observe, that these *contrary Faculties* are inherent in all Creatures, neither could the Creation subsist, were it not for the Discords as well as the Agreements of the Elements. The whole Universe subsists by the *Opposition of its Parts*, and the Epitome of it, our Microcosm is preserv'd by its *intestine Divisions*. So that I cannot apprehend a more immediate Way for the supreme Architect to overthrow his Works, than by diffusing that *Nepenthe* through the Elements, which should compose their Quarrels, for they would no sooner cease to hate their

their *Contraries*, but they would also desist from loving themselves; and having thus lost the Cement which fastens them together in this exquisite Order, they must necessarily return to their primitive Chaos out of which they were extracted.

HOWEVER I will not from these *innocent Feuds of inanimate Creatures* draw Arguments to countenance in my self a Hatred which is criminal, being assured that among those *various Aversions* which molest the Quiet of Men, there is hardly one which is not against Reason or Morality. Every Creature bears in its Essence the Stamp of infinite Goodness; and 'twere gross Impiety to calumniate any of those Works, on which God himself has bestow'd an *universal Panegyrick*, when he pronounc'd them all to be good. They are all lovely in their Order, and those which our squeamish Fancies esteem the most odious, have Qualities which claim our Love and Admiration. Those *venomous Creatures* which we shun as the inveterate Enemies of our Race, deserve our Caresses instead of our Spight, since the Service they afford us, equals the Hurt we receive from them, and the most efficacious Medicines are sometimes compounded of the fiercest Poisons. In strict speaking, the *Devils* themselves are not the Object of my Hatred, according to their Essence, tho' they are so by the Malice of their Will. They still retain their *natural Perfections*,

90 *The Religion of a Bookseller.*

tions, and the Goodness of their Essence remains the same as it was before their Fall. Their Vigour, Beauty, and intellectual Accomplishments, have suffered no Detriment from the Depravedness of their Affections, but remain untouch'd, as when they shone among the Hierarchies above. And though God detests and punishes them for their Crimes, yet he himself loves and conserves their Essence. There is nothing therefore in Heaven, Earth, or Hell, but **Sin** that deserves our Hatred; with all things else we may be enamour'd; and we ought to hate this Monster so much the more, in that by disordering our Natures, it has planted in us those Antipathies and Aversions which make us peevish at the Works of God, and hate those Things which we ought to love.

BUT among all the Species of Hatred, I tremble at that which is exercis'd against our own Race, because I find none so violent, none so inexorable as one Man against another. They are not content with the most furious Sallies of this Passion during their Lives, but to consummate the Heighth of their Malice, they willingly involve themselves in Death. With *Atreus* they take Delight in their own Ruin, provided *Thyestes* may be crush'd in it too. Nay this Passion is immortal, and descends into the very Grave. The Antipathies of *Eteocles* and *Polynices* were translated to the other World, their Hatred fur-

surviv'd their Breath, it liv'd in their Ashes, and would not suffer their divided Flames to mix in the same funeral Pile. Above all I abhor the *Italians* inflexible Cruelty, who bequeath their Hatred as an Inheritance to their Children, adjuring them to eternal Enmity, with Curses on such of their Off-spring as shall ever make Peace with their Foes.

I quarrel not with that *Logick*, by which we call a Toad venomous. 'Twould prove but a thin *Sophistry* that should impose upon us the Safety of the Experiment; and I doubt our best *Metaphyficks* would make but a weak Antidote against the Force of its Poisson. I am not fond of quibbling my self into so dangerous an Absurdity under the Protection of a refin'd Theory, whose Practice wou'd convince me of a foolish Madness, and that I were neither good Philosopher nor Divine. Yet I cannot say I hate even this Creature which is become the Proverb of human Hatred: For as much as it carries with it, in its Life and Motion, the Character and Impression of a *divine Artificer*; especially for this Reason, that we have no Cause to believe it ever sinned, and consequently thereupon maintains and performs the End and Design of its Creation, which tho' it be in a lower Sphere, has this Prerogative beyond Mankind; that it never yet transgress'd the Rules, nor violated the Laws of its Maker. Nor can I imagine whence our Reflections upon such Creatures

should arise, but from a mistaken Knowledge of our selves, and a perfect Ignorance of the Nature of all Things beside. 'Tis under the Prejudice of Education, and the prevailing Influence of Custom that we labour, and to which we owe the greatest and most detested Errors of our Life. Have not some People liv'd upon that, and deliciously too, that is another Man's Poison? Did not *Mithridates* take Poison till the strongest Confection of that kind would not do his Business when he wanted it? 'Tis to that we are to ascribe the Mischiefs of human Life. For if we could once forsake the *false Guide* we have been us'd to, and consult our own Reason, there's nothing would seem strange to us, nothing uneasy, nothing dreadful. Therefore after I have a little descanted upon this Subject, in order to rectify our Judgments, and reform our Practices, I shall cross the Cudgels, and end this Discourse.

IT is impossible fully to set forth the large Dominion and incontrolable Power of *Custom* and common *Usage*, together with the vast and long *Series of Difficulties and Mistakes* we lie liable and expos'd unto upon that account. 'Tis the Master of the Mint, and coins *Words and Names* for things according to its own Pleasure, sometimes not at all expressive of the Nature of the thing intended; which have no further Signification than what they obtain'd by repeated Use and Frequency.

We know very well that nothing in its own Nature is *accidental*, and in respect of the supreme Author all things are regular and designed; but in Reference to us whose *pурblind Reason* can reach no deeper than the Outside, whose Sight is not sharp enough to dive and penetrate into the Causes of Things, many things prove fortuitous. When Events strong and unexpected fall out, such as we had not the least Apprehension or Suspicion of beforehand, we call it *Chance and Accident*. But the Misery is we terminate there, and never look to the hand that order'd it. We attribute that to *Fortune* which is the Effect of a wise and skilful *Agent*. When our Expectations are balk'd, and our Aims frustrated, we cry 'twas done by *Chance*, and think that's all. Whereas we ought to consider, that God oftentimes delights to make our *Wisdom Foolishness*, and thereby gives us Caution not to trust our own Foresight; since the Events of all things are in his Power and at his Disposal. He will be ey'd in his *Providence*, and make Men know that the Success of all their Undertakings is at his Discretion. That he is the sole Governor of the World: That he will be sought unto for his Blessing, and that we must wait his Pleasure, and ascribe the Glory of all to him. But this ought not to encourage us in a supine and slothful Negligence; that because God does all things according to the good Pleasure of his Will, we have nothing to do, but ex-

expect he should bring things about for Advantage and Satisfaction. For tho' Grace loves to magnify it self in the *Weak*, and exerts its Efficacy in mean and contemptible Subjects, yet that's no Ground for us to stand *idle*, or sit *whining* and bewailing our Misfortunes, and think God should bear our Burden himself. No, these remarkable Efforts of the Divine Power are to encourage our Stedfastness, and confirm us in the Belief of its undoubted Presence, when our Designs and Endeavours are conformable. It is impertinent and ridiculous to expect Relief from others, when we are wholly unactive to procure it our selves. We ought to make Use of the best Means he affords us, and then resigning our selves up to him, attend the Success. If it be according to our Desires, we must gratefully acknowledge, and thank him for it: If contrary, we must in all Humility submit, confessing his *Wisdom* infinitely to exceed ours, and that he knows what is better for us than we our selves. This is what *Divinity* teaches us, and cou'd we be instructed by it, might greatly advance our Peace and Tranquillity in this World.

This is a Strain of Prudence, I know, Mankind can hardly be skrew'd up to. The Infirmity of human Nature is such, that every Shock of unexpected Adversity makes it stagger. We are ready to turn *Recrueants*, and yield the Day to every puny Evil, that unlooked

ed for attacks us. 'Tis well if we can support our Spirits, and preserve our Courage against a fore-seen Danger ; but to be surpriz'd by a Misfortune, is to be overcome. I am of Opinion the Combat would not be difficult, nor the Victory uncertain, were we but better acquainted with our selves, and knew our own Strength, and how to apply our selves to the Work. Some torment themselves with distracting Apprehensions afore-hand, and doubly possess their Misery in Reality and Fancy. Others immediately sink under the Weight as soon as they feel it on their Shoulders. Others fly out into Despair, as if the World were at an End, and they were never to see a good Day again. For my part, as I cannot altogether boast of Insensibility, under my Afflictions at present ; so neither can I complain of being too apprehensive of them at a distance. I can see the Cloud gathering without much Consternation, and comfort my self with this, that perhaps some Wind or other may blow it away, or I am not infallibly sure it shall break on my Head. I shall have enough of it whenever it comes, and do not so much provide to avoid it, as consider of what Importance it may be whether I escape it or no. Perhaps 'tis my Fault, but I am willing to indulge it. I have no other Means. I can consider it without too much Concern. I approach it without Horror. I bring it home to my self, and treat with it as present, when perhaps it may never

never come to pass. I inure my self to it, and harden my self in it, by which means it becomes familiar to me, that when it overtakes me, I claim *Acquaintance* with it. This *dulls* the Edge, and *blunts* the Sting of an Affliction; which otherwise it may be I should never be able to *sustain*.

BUT let us examine *Reason*, and see what Arms she can furnish us with for our Defence, against these violent Assualts. She would in a great measure do our Busines for us, could we take her Advice, and were there not *private* Enemies *within*, that compel us to surrender before we try our Strength. If our *Passions* were disarmed and subdued, and brought into Obedience to *Reason*, we might maintain our Ground with less Difficulty, and bid Defiance to *Fortune*. This ought to be the *Subject* of our Courage. In this we shall appear more than *Conquerors*. Let us stop these *Beginnings*, and our Busines is soon done. Nothing in Nature can be more tumultuous and irregular than our own Passions. And with what Face can any Man pretend to withstand the sudden and violent Attempts of *Fortune*, that has no Guard against the inward and unruly Motions of his own *Soul*? Whither do we see some People hurried, by the precipitous Streams of *Anger*, *Love*, *Hatred*, &c. even upon a bare Apprehension and Jealousy, without the least Discovery of Cause or Motive? I have seen the accidental breaking

ing of a *Glass*, the Loss of a *Groat*, transport some to such a *Degree*, that they could hardly compose and recover themselves for six Hours after. They fall foul upon all without Distinction, all Company must be disturb'd wherever they come, 'tis impossible to give a calm uninterrupted Answer to any thing that is ask'd them. They stamp, stare, burn, rave, fret, roar, as if the *Day of Judgment* was at hand, and they were a going quick to *Pluto*. Wherefore do you wring your Hands? Why are those Tears? Why look you so discontented? You have lost your best *Friend* A dear Relation. You are afraid you shall be poor. The *Wheel* is come upon you. You cannot see how your Estate will hold out, and know not how to live when that is gone. Poor *Wretch*! The plain Truth is, you have lost your Reason. What is become of your Religion, your Faith, your Confidence? Is this the Upshot of all your Talk of relying on Providence, of trusting God? Do you not belye your selves? Is he not able? Is he not willing? Why are you not *calm*? Why are you not *quiet*? They may talk as long as they please, but it must be somewhat more than a few fine Words, and pathetical Expressions, that must convince me of the Sincerity of their Profession, who distrust Providence upon every slender Occasion. Are not these brave Men, think you? Grace delights to accompany a vigorous and active Soul, and carries it out to

perform Atchievements beyond its own Strength and above its Hopes, but unless our Endeavours comport with our *Words*, Providence despairs us as unworthy of his Care. What does that Soldier deserve that brags of singly conquering whole *Armies*, and turns his *Back* at the first Charge; nay, runs away perhaps before the Enemy is in View, thro' a slavish Despair of his own Ability to resist? *Our whole Life is a Warfare.* We have many Adversaries to encounter. Some face us in the *open Field*, and give us Leisure to prepare, and require a fixt and determinate Resolution to oppose them. Some surprize us between the *Hedge* and the *Ditch*, as they say, and expect we should be perpetually armed and upon our *Watch*. These are *Trials* sent on purpose to evidence our Constancy, and if we bear up manfully, our Courage shall be seconded and fortified with an *Almighty Assistance*. Yet it is a common Observation, that none are more apt to repine, than such whose *Tongues* can run nimbly in *Matiess* of this Nature.

To what Purpose then shou'd we torment our selves and others? And seeing we are *unable* to govern our selves or our Affairs, why do we not deliver up our selves to the *Conduct* of him who governs the World? Why do we macerate our Souls and Bodies when our vain Imaginations become successless and ineffectual? Since there is a wise and intelligent

ligent Moderator, who will bring things about according to the Methods of his own *superlative Wisdom*, in Defiance of human *Craft* and *Policy*. We may lay the *Scheme* of our Affairs as rationally as we can devise, and back it with our utmost Power and Diligence, and then we have satisfied our *Office* and done our Duty; for in spite of all, the *Issue* and Result of all must finally and arbitrarily depend upon the absolute Will and Pleasure of another.

I am persuaded, *Custom* and *Example* lead us into more Errors and Mistakes than any thing else beside. I find we submit to them with great Ease and little Reluctance: Nay, and think our selves very excusable in all the *Slips* we make when we follow that *Guide*. Our very Dispositions, methinks, and natural Inclinations, are subdued by them; and in many things drawn to a *Compliance*, even against their own *Byass*. They *habituate* us to Actions, however ungrateful and disrelishing at their first Appearance, and assist us to perform them with *Smoothness* and *Facility*. I find the Path *rugged* when I am out of my usual *Way*, and we are contented to *jogg* on quietly in a *wrong Road*, rather than put our selves to the Trouble of finding out the *right*. 'Tis *brutish* and unmanly not to examine what we do, and to be able to give no better Account of our Actions, than that it is the *Custom* of the *Place*. To what Purpose serve our rational

100 *The Religion of a Bookseller.*

tional and discerning Faculties, if we suspend their Exercise, and not suffer them to have their *Play* in their natural and proper *Velitations*? Why should we debase our own Judgments by a slavish Submission to common Usage. I then frustrate the End of my Being, for one of the main Businesses I have here is to acquire the *Knowledge of my self*. And 'tis for my own Actions I shall be immediately accountable, and not those of other Men. *Example*, I confess, may be of great Use, but then it must be manag'd according to *Discretion*. It may serve as a *Caution*, but never as a *Rule*: It may be admitted into *Council*, but not entrusted with the *Govern-ment*. It may prove an excellent *Monitor*, but a very wretched *Dictator*. Nor, when thus qualified and circumscribed, can it be of any Advantage to us, without a previous *Knowledge* and *Understanding* of our selves. 'Tis the *wise Man* only that knows his own Strength, that shall use it with Success. And as such an one has need of it; so he shall be further removed from its insinuating and usurping *Dominion*.

I wou'd therefore begin first with *my self*, ransack my own Soul, and exactly know its Frame and Constitution. I wou'd muster my own Forces first, and dive into the Truth of things, and put my Understanding upon the Exercise of its Function, and give my Judgment its full *Swing*. Truth shall be the Subject

ject of my Disquisition, and the End of my Enquiry.

If we look into the Behaviour and Practice of most Men, we shall find Fancy to have the Ascendant over them. The Dread of not succeeding shakes their Resolutions. They are *timorous* and *inconstant*, because they neither know *themselves*, nor what they wou'd be at. Every unsuspected Danger scares them out of their Wits. They create Monsters in their own *Brains*, and supposing them above their Strength to resist; they *slavishly* resign the little Reason they wou'd seem to be *Masters* of to every *uncommon* Evil, not knowing how to withstand or avoid it. It behoves me then to examine the Tendency of my own Desires, and see whether any thing *substantial* hath affected my Mind. Hath any Man met with any thing that gives him a full and compleat Satisfaction? Or does he not find his Passions and Appetite to encrease upon him, and require somewhat more even in the very Possession and Enjoyments of their Objects? We penetrate no deeper than the *Surface*, and acquiesce in a *superficial* Glance. We ought therefore to come out of the *Dark*, that we may see to walk in the *Light*. We must *unlearn*, what we *think* we know, to be taught what we *ought* to know. *The first Advance towards Wisdom is to renounce our Folly.* Our Minds can never be filled with sound and

whole-

wholsome Knowledge, till they are first dis-  
posseſt of their Prejudices.

I hate to hear People cry out, Why cannot I do *thus* and *thus*? Why cannot I manage an Affair like this or that Man? I'll tell you, because you are a Fool, and do not know your self: Because you cannot be contented as you are. Uneasiness and Dissatisfaction under a Man's present Condition, is an assured and manifest Proof he would carry himself as *unhandsomly* in another. Nature and Providence hath design'd every Man his Task, and that which is most suitable to him. He that cannot govern a *Skuller*, would make an improper Commander of a Man of *War*. It would, I profess, make a Man laugh till he expires, to come into a *Coffee-house*, and behold a *Pack* of *Cits* prating of *Politicks* and State Matters, as if they were all *Machiavels* and *Mazarins*. Had I been the *King*, says one, that has not Wit enough to commend him for a *Rat-catcher*, I would have done *thus*. Had I been in Council, cries another, I wou'd never have advised that. Ye doating *Coxcombs*! Why don't ye regulate your *Families*? Why do you suffer your *Wives* to wear the *Breeches*? Why do your *Daughters* run away with the *Bullies*? And your *Prentices* get to Bed to their *Mistresses*? Amend your selves first, correct your *domestick* Exorbitances, exemplify your *Pru-dence* in rectifying your private Affairs. Deal faithfully in your Trades, and become honest Men,

Men, and then you shall have leave to prate. I have often considered with my self, what should be the Reason Men are so often disappointed of their Ends, and balk'd in their Hopes? They undertake more than they can answer for, and by a ridiculous Presumption, enter upon Busines they can never accomplish. It is Ignorance that is the ground of all our Miscarriages, and *Pride* puts us upon Attempts too weighty for our *Shoulders*. They are *Twin-Sisters*, and the latter is a natural Companion of the former. We have every one of us within our own proper *Sphere*, -more Work cut out than we know well how to effect: Which one Consideration, could it but duly take place, would be of Force enough to discourage us from loading our Shoulders with unnecessary Burdens.

I am confident nothing more betrays the *Weakness* and *Infirmity* of human Nature, than *Impatience* under our present Circumstances, and a busy Curiosity of prying into the Affairs of others. 'Tis the Employment of a weak Understanding, and a Soul wholly unacquainted with it self, to be impetuously hurried with a Desire after things altogether beyond our proper Province. Surely Nature hath better provided for us, than we can for our selves; and did we but *regularly* follow her Dictates, we should not be so often compell'd to our Shifts. But the Mischief is, we are too much prone to *admire* every thing we do not possess.

possess. A *Vanity intolerable!* Which did it not shroud it self under the Covert of *Custom*, wou'd soon be abhor'd and banish'd out of the World. But *common Practice* is become its *Advocate*, and irresistibly pleads its Defence in a vulgar *Juicature*. Should we not think a *Neighbour crack'd* on one Side of his Head, who wou'd entertain us an Hour or two together, with an exact and accurate Description of some foreign Country, when all the while he does not know the Way to his own Parish Church? *Preposterous Madness!* to pretend to know every thing, and yet be totally ignorant of our selves.

It is enough already, that I have lived for others. Let me at last return home, and do somewhat for my self. Time flies away, Nature decays, and I shall soon find my self most unfit for the Work, when I shall stand most in need of Strength to do it. To what Purpose is it, we are so busily concern'd in *Exotick Affairs*, things neither consistent with our present Peace, nor conducive to our future Happiness.

WHEN I take a Review, and give my Mind leave (as she would often do, did I not impertinently divert her) to recollect her own Thoughts, and make a serious Reflection on the *Employments* and *Enjoyments* too of her past Life. Good God! how full of Vanity and Inquietude, and Dissatisfaction, do they appear? As enforces from me a *Subscription* to this

this fatal Truth; that it is I my self that have prevented my own Happiness, and by a senseless Extravagance, and stupid Self-Ignorance, undermined the Tranquillity of a Life that might have been more *peaceable*, and consequently more *pleasant*, than the present Prospect of any Circumstances now warrant me to expect. I could now almost hate, and curse my self, as to my *Folly*, and *Self-Love* it self would justify my Indignation. But that is not the Way, and Prudence suggests another Course. Let me therefore at least preserve what I enjoy, if I cannot recover what I have lost. Let the Consideration of what is past, awaken my Diligence for the future. We have been Fools, and who has not? Let Wisdom make amends and cancel the *Shame*. I have learn'd, at least, this by the Bargain, to know my Distemper, which makes the Cure less difficult. There is somewhat of *Good* to be extracted from every thing: And Prescriptions, in Appearance contrary, have eventually proved themselves friendly to Nature.

To do our own proper Business, and to know *our selves*, is the only important Employment we have in this World. And he that can do the latter, will never be at a Loss in the former. He will avoid all superfluous Undertakings. He can tell how to reform the Extravagance of his Passions, and correct the Impetuosity of an hot Nature. He will

106 *The Religion of a Bookseller.*

never be obliged to prosecute the Concerns of another, while any thing of his own lies on his Hands. Every thing he engages in shall be brought to Perfection; because he attempts no more than he *understands*, and is able to accomplish. This Consideration wou'd fix our Thoughts, restrain and bridle our Desires, and limit our Fancies within their due Bounds.

It has been my Observation ever since I have been acquainted in the World, That most Men are *stray*, they are guilty of a perpetual *Trespass*, and a *Clausum fregit* may be charg'd upon us all. We see how foolish and impertinent soever Men ordinarily are, yet they observe a *Decorum*, and put a Constraint upon their Words and Actions, when they are in Company of Persons reputed wise and good: And an Affront put upon them before such, will be more highly resented, than if they were all of their own Stamp and Rank. So should we learn to be acquainted, and reverence ourselves, and dare to think and speak nothing in our own Presence, we should be ashamed of before a *Solomon* or a *Cato*. Let us then for once become our own Masters: Let us consult our selves, and take Advice of our Reason: 'Tis she alone will instruct us, not only what we have to do, but also govern us in the Management of our Actions, with much less Solicitude, and much more Facility. The Sovereignty is her Due, our

our Passions are her Slaves, and she ought to have the Principal, if not the only Concurrence in all our Attempts. Leave the Busines wholly to her, and you shall find she will render the Event at least excusable, let it be what it will.

How vain is it thus to shun our selves, and follow the *Multitude*! That Man must certainly deserve *Bedlam*, who employs all his Time in examining the Estates of others, and values himself for knowing the particular Concerns of the noblest *Families* of the Nation, when yet he is a *Stranger* to what passes under his own *Roof*, and can never find Leisure to adjust his own *private Accounts*. For my part, I am ashamed of my self, that little Knowledge I have acquired of my own Temper, if so much as to let me know the Necessity I have of knowing more. It is difficult for us to arrive at any tolerable Information of another's Humour, and to give a just and regular Estimate of him; we must follow him close, pursue all his Windings and Turnings, trace him through all his Variations, Forms, and Appearances. Thus we must do with our selves, nor is the Labour quite so perplext. Mankind is all *Labyrinth* and *Disguise*, and never shews the same Face two Hours together. I know my self better than all the Men in the World know me, and can be more just and faithful, according to Truth, in my Judgment and Censure. They set up a *Rule*,

and try all Complexions and Temperaments by *that*, wildly, unreasonably, and uncertainly. I daily find them miserably out in their Conjectures of me, even those who think they best know me. They may frame a general *Air* of my Humour, by a frequent Conversation, but are wonderfully mistaken in their Application, as to the Ends, Inducements, and Motives of most of my Actions.

THE most stupid Soul that is, will sometimes work upon her self, review her own Thoughts and Inclinations, and would delight to be more conversant in this Exercise, if we did not interrupt her Meditation by the Proposal of external Objects, which do not at all concern her. It is the best Acquaintance we can have, and would deal more faithfully and wisely in her Advisements than the best Friend we know upon Earth. It is, I am confident, the want of this Intelligence that occasions all the Irregularities and Disorders we are *guilty* of. Remember to make *Reason* and *Conscience* of your *Party*, and you will soon perceive your Anxiety and Torment abated. Then should we not only be *wise*, but in a great measure *happy* to boot: And for ought I know, in as high a Degree as human Nature is capable of attaining. For the greatest Part of our *Felicity*, as I take it, in this Life, is placed in a due Management of our Afflictions, or the intire *Dominion* and *Monarchy* of Reason over our *Passions*. It is a prejudgetice

dicate Opinion, begot by *Example*, fomented by *Education*, and inveterate by *Custom*, which has infected our Minds, and debauch'd our Palates, that we can relish nothing according to its true and natural *Taste*. For the Objects we converse with, have for the most part an *indifferent Inclination to Good or Evil*, and operate upon us only after the Judgment we make of them. We are *Masters* of every thing before us, and a *wise Man* hath an admirable *Dexterity* of drawing *Sweetness* from what others call a *Calamity*: And makes all the Injuries of Fortune, serve his Designs, and further his Advancement. They are generally Men of weak Spirits, who are dejected with *Adversity*, or exalted with *Prosperity*. And who is either way affected with these things, gives a strong Argument of his *Embecility*, that he knows not how to live *agreeable* to either *Nature* or *Reason*. Will any Man glory in another Man's Excellencies, and value himself, because his Neighbour has a House better furnish'd than his own? The Case is the same. Whatsoever is in the Power of *Fortune*, belongs not to us. We ought no more to be concern'd at her Contempts, than elevated with her Favours. She is a capricious Goddess, and the Frailty of Mankind is the Subject of her Humour. She swells a *Bubble* with *Pride*, and breaks it with *Scorn*. Whoever trusts her, does but treasure up to him-

110 *The Religion of a Bookseller.*

himself an abundant and *inexplicable* Matter of Discontent and Perturbation.

I could (in some Fits of contemplative Melancholy) fall asleep as soon in a Church-Yard as on my Bed; and am often so weary of dull Life, that my greatest Delight is in such Objects as speak most to its Advantage.

I know that I carry a *Ghost* always about me, and that I my self am a *walking Spirit*. This Thought allays in me those vulgar Fears of the Haunts and Visits of *Spectres*. And as I am not at all afraid of my self, so I am very little apprehensive of *Apparitions*: Nay more, I could wish the *Communications* more frequent betwixt us and the *Inhabitants* of the *upper World*: It wou'd harden our *Christian Courage*, familiarize to us the Thoughts of *Separation*; and create in us a more passionate Love of the *heavenly Country*.

I pretend not by the *Title* of this small Treatise to any extraordinary *Scheme* or new *Draught* of Religion for Men of my own Profession; much less would I be thought flyly to suggest any Neglect or Deficiency of theirs in the Practice of the Old: I am very well assured, that *Religio Bibliopolæ* seems a direct Tautology. But surely it can be no Offence to say, that I could wish we were all more in Earnest for *Heaven*, and that we had all the Wisdom and Virtue that ever appeared in the *Guise* of true Reason in the World, summed up and amassed in a *Christian Bookseller*; especially

## *The Religion of a Bookseller.* III

especially in a daily, sincere Contempt of this World.

No eager Pursuit, or restless intemperate Desire of Wealth or Honour, must be harbour'd by us, who are to fix our whole Hopes on another Country; and we should confess ourselves Strangers and Pilgrims on this Earth, by the Precepts and Examples of all the *holy Prophets* and *Apostles* throughout the whole Book of God. To set any extraordinary *Va-lue on the World*, is to unravel the peculiar Principle of Christianity, and run retrograde to the Steps of the *Holy Jesus*.

F I N I S.



